Saturday Review

OF LITERATURE

TWENTY CENTS OCTOBER 29, 1949

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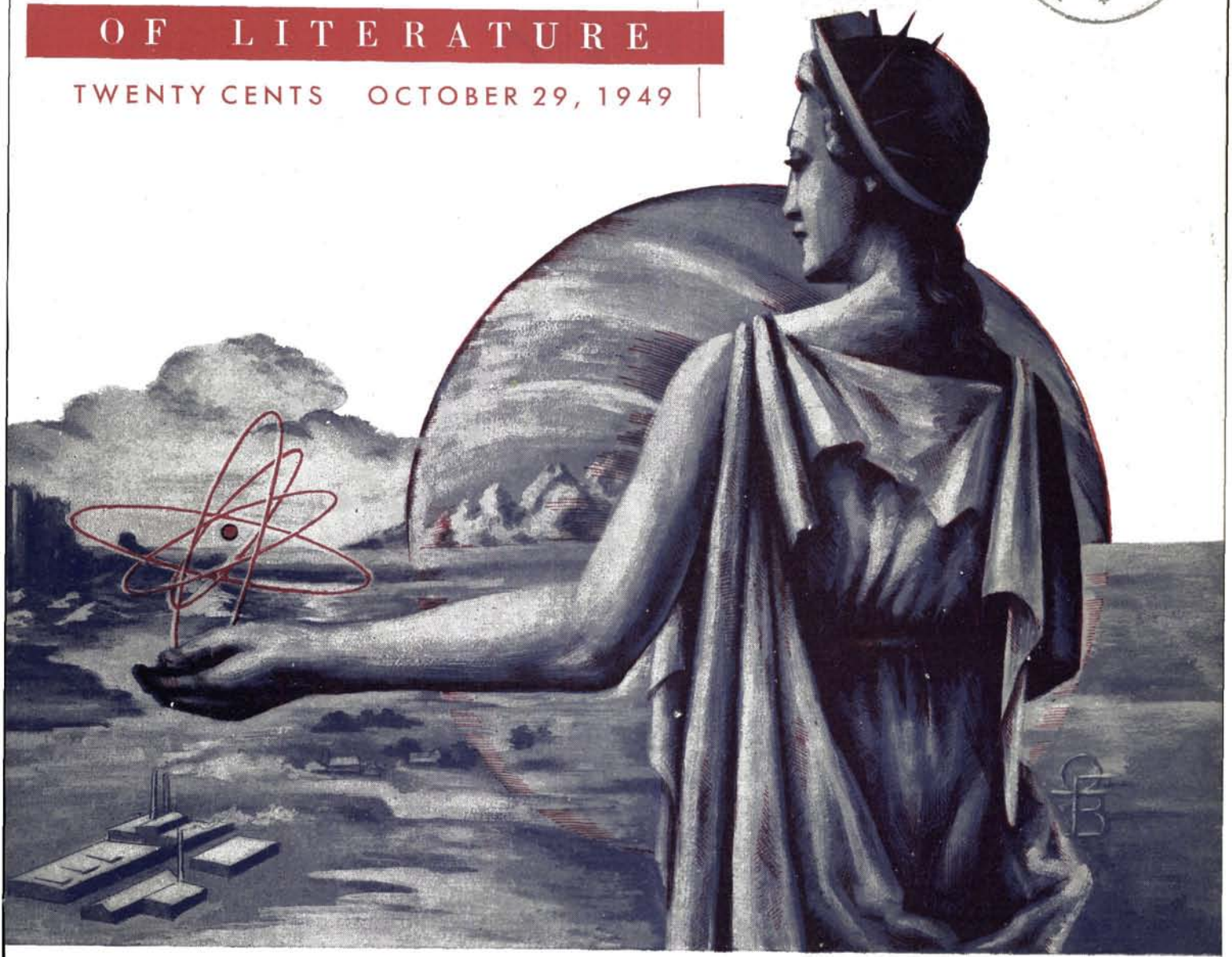

"Years of the Modern"—"a consultation on American life." (See page 12)

The Book Business—With and Without Profit

By J. K. LASSER

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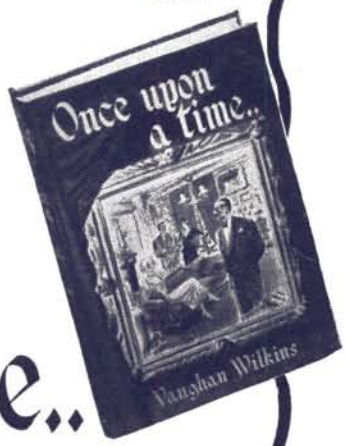

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This Week

October 29, 1949

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TRADE Winds

"THE CUSTOMERS ALWAYS WRITE"

IF TED WEEKS, of *The Atlantic Monthly,* is seriously interested in corralling more novels dealing with college life, (see TRADE WINDS for August 13), contributors offer him the following suggestions:

From Miriam de Ford: "The Western Shore," by Clarkson Crane, whose scene is the University of California at Berkeley.

From Charles Kirk: "How can Mr. Weeks have forgotten the Burt L. Standish classics of Frank Merriwell at Yale?"

From Gustavus Paine: "Chimes," by Robert Herrick, dealing with the faculty of the University of Chicago.

From Rupert Holland: "Harvard Stories," by Waldron K. Post; "Philosophy Four," by Owen Wister; "Princeton Stories," by Jesse Lynch Williams; "Pennsylvania Stories," by Arthur Hobson Quinn, and "The Count at Harvard," by Mr. Holland himself.

From K. S. Giniger: "Charles Wertenbaker and his brother, Green Peyton, both published books about the University of Virginia. Charlie's books were 'Boojum,' 'Peter the Drunk,' and 'To My Father.' I don't remember the titles of Green Peyton's books and may be wrong in thinking he wrote more than one. Then, too, weren't Vardis Fisher's early novels about Midwest college life?"

From Peirce Fuller: "May I suggest the inclusion of 'Harvard Has a Homicide,' by Timothy Fuller?"

From Martin Gardner: "The late Will Cuppy wrote 'Maroon Tales' about the University of Chicago in 1909. The U. of C. is also the background for Zo Flannigan's 'Grey Towers' and Sterling North's 'Seven Against the Years.' Speaking of Cuppy's book, I once showed him a review I had saved from the *Chicago Daily News* concluding, 'Cuppy's novel is in no way remarkable.' 'That last sentence is a lie,' said Will calmly. 'Here, read this review from the *Daily Maroon.* I wrote it myself.' "

From Rose Silverstone: "The Ivy Years," by Earl Schenck Miers (Rutgers).

From Jim Russell: "Doctor's Oral," by George Stewart, and "The Professor's Umbrella," by Mary Jane Ward.

From Muriel Fuller: "To think you forgot George Ade's 'At Old Siwash' and Ole Skjlarson's famous run!" (Knox College.)

From Samuel Hopkins Adams:

> Stories of American colleges? The first identifiable one that I recall is "His Majesty, Myself," published sometime in the Eighties. The scene was Princeton. It was a good novel. Jesse Lynch Williams's book of Princeton tales (*circa* 1895) is still worth reading. And what about "Fraternity Row"? Was that Wisconsin or California? Allowing for some slight exaggeration of atmosphere, it was a fine job.
>
> You will probably find that many of the small, old colleges have produced literature about themselves. Hamilton is represented, though not too worthily, we Hamiltonians think, by Coonradt's "Dance Out the Answer." Union fares still worse in "Beer for the Kitten." What about Amherst, Williams, Trinity, Bowdoin, Swarthmore? It would be strange, indeed, if some loving alumnus had not perpetuated his alma mater's glory in fiction. There should be many American Tom Browns awaiting immortality in the *ars triplex* of sound fiction. . . .

DONALD LINDSAY, of Cleveland, has compiled a list of "New Editions, Musical and Literary, for an Era of Deflation": "Two Saints in One and a Half Acts"; "None but the Lonely Half a Heart"; "Three Characters in Search of Half an Author"; "The Three and a Half Who Were Hanged"; Tarkington's "Eight and a Half"; Hecht's and MacArthur's "Tenth Century"; "The One and a Half Musketeers." Lindsay adds that he is now working on stories of the profile that launched 500 ships, the 300 who rode into the jaws of coma, one soul with but half a thought, and five little Indians. . . . Here are a few more of those bargain book titles. Marjorie Wihtol submits "The Brave Bullfinch's Mythology," "Blood and San Michele," "The Grapes of Basil Rathbone," and "Iphigenia in Aulis and Heaven Too." Roger Angell suggests "Howard's End as a Man's Hope of Heaven's My Destination Tokyo"

"Monday night you stopped by the hospital to visit a sick friend and got operated on by mistake. Tuesday night some people put you in a box and tried to mail you to Florida to be used as live bait in an alligator hunt. Wednesday night you helped an ex-army buddy's race horse give birth to a colt in the back of a Yellow Cab. Thursday night an FBI man asked you to watch a dangerous spy for him while he made a phone call, and you had to follow her all over the state. Where were you tonight?"
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(wow!), "Huckleberry Finnegans Wake," and "Life with Father of the Brideshead Revisited." And Charles Lawrence comes up with "Monsieur Beaucaire and Feeding of Infants," "Ten Days That Shook the World Almanac," and "Lo, Hear the Gentle Larkansas Traveler." . . .

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY in Paris and the special Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library both need help. Theodore Rousseau, who used to cash checks at the Guaranty Trust branch on the Place de la Concorde for such young writers in the early Twenties as Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and Louis Bromfield, writes:

> The American Library in Paris is the only privately endowed and supported American library outside the United States. Through a major depression, the German occupation, and a second world war, the American Library has continued to render service to the tens of thousands of people in France who are interested in America. During the German occupation, as probably the only place in German Europe where books in English could be freely read, it maintained for the French an open window on the free world.
>
> Following its postwar reorganization and modernization, the American Library is now serving more people than ever before, two out of three of whom are French. Its greatest problem for the coming year is to assure a steady supply of new books from America. The budget in dollars is not sufficiently large to permit an adequate buying program, and the Library is forced to depend to a very large extent on the generosity of its friends in America. Several publishing houses supply the American Library regularly with copies of their new books; authors, too, have been most generous, and donations have been made specifically for the purchase of books. It would be most helpful, however, if other friends made it a practice to mail to the Library, by book post, copies of new books which they do not wish to keep for themselves. The Library cannot have too many copies of most of the currently popular books, and there is no danger of unwanted duplications. Book post is cheap and quick, presenting none of the complications of mailing gift packages to France. . . .

Bernard Sobel, author of the invaluable "Theatre Handbook" (Crown), says that the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library is so handicapped for funds that it cannot give full or even adequate service to those who depend upon its facilities.

> At the present time [he adds] it is working on a wartime basis and a sadly limited schedule. It is open only five or six days a week, and then on afternoons only, from one to six. It is closed in the evenings and on Sundays. Those people, as a result, who work at night and those who have only their week ends free, can never have direct access to the Collection.
>
> But even more serious than the matter of limited public use is what is happening to the Collection itself. Because of the lack of funds, these serious conditions exist: Bibliographies are not being kept up to date. New York theatre and cinema programs are not being mounted. Television and radio data are being similarly neglected. Cataloguing of thousands of theatrical photographs, clippings, programs, and material buried in non-theatrical books can no longer be continued. Hundreds of photographs and posters which are required for reproduction in books and magazines are lying useless, packed

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away in makeshift bags. Hundreds of volumes of playbills, boxed photographs, scripts, and important books are now valueless because they are stored in warehouses or moved downstairs to the stacks, no longer accessible to the general public.

Because of the lack of permanent space, the Collection cannot hold regular exhibitions of rare pictures and important designs, and cannot use a bulletin board for the listing of important off-Broadway productions, drama contests, public lectures, and showings of unusual films. However, in spite of these unfortunate conditions, the Collection served over 20,000 people during the past year, including a notable galaxy of writers, producers, scenic artists, actors, publishers, and representatives from the motion-picture, radio, and television worlds.

Conditions at the Theatre Collection could be greatly helped if there were enough money to engage one more staff assistant and one or two page boys. Will you, through your column, please bring these facts to the attention of readers of *SRL*? . . .

FROM JOE HARRINGTON, famous columnist of the *Boston Post*:

One of the small but highly rated New England colleges was observing its 150th anniversary and the heads of institutions of higher learning across the country were invited to participate. They came to the party with their gowns and bright hoods.

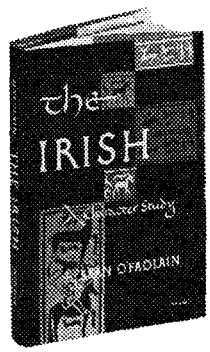
The academic procession formed and started to march to the chapel, headed by the president of the college they were honoring. At the entrance to the chapel the president thought ahead to the three hours he would have to sit on the platform, so he stopped, turned to two famous educators behind him, and asked them to wait for a few minutes. Then he ducked out of line.

The two college presidents he had spoken to misunderstood him. And they and the entire academic procession followed him downstairs to the gentlemen's room. . . .

THAT REMINDS ME of the story of Frisco, the stuttering comedian, who lost his way in the fog one night while driving his roadster from Palm Springs to San Bernardino. There was a car ahead of him picking its way through the enshrouding mist, and Frisco decided to follow closely behind it. This labor-saving device worked fine until the car that was guiding him stopped s h o r t—and Frisco's runabout smashed into its rear bumper.

The excited comedian jumped to the ground and hollered, "Why don't you s-s-stick your hand out when you c-c-come to a stop?" A voice hollered back, "Why should I—in my own garage?"

—Bennett Cerf.



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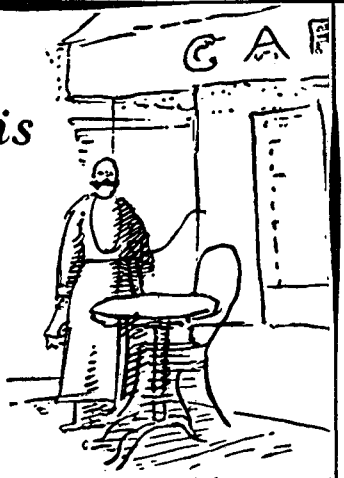
The years of your life in Paris



From the first glimpse of the pretty mannequins in their wide skirts and boots rustling past the new blue uniforms of the soldiers of France, this book makes you part of the life of a quiet Paris Square. The talk is of unfamiliar farewells and promises — to wait, to write, to take Berlin within a month. It is 1914, and in the fellowship of war, you begin to know your neighbors better, the centrally heated lady of easy virtue — apartment 4, the square-set abbé Gaston off to the front with his belongings packed in a newspaper, the redoubtable Mme. Boulon who would never make a penny if she didn't watch her tenants sharply.

The years flow, the worn uniforms decorated with ribbons have been put away for it is 1923 and you sigh over the worldliness of the Cardinal's enchanting niece, listen to scraps of tinny singing from the earphones of a crystal set, learn the new elbow technique of the subway struggle and talk glibly about the new broom sweeping Italy. If you are fortunate, there is a letter from the abbé written from South America, its glowing good-will pointed up by a mature and decorous wit.

And there you will live enclosed by the lovely rain-gray buildings of the Place du Marechal Haig, overhearing the scraps of talk that underline the personal history of your generation, looking to the abbé Gaston as a philosopher's touchstone, enjoying the mannequins' noonday parade in the sun of the Square. And so you are involved in the life of Paris itself to feel the odd premonition of loss and conquest, to avert your eyes from the black uniforms, and at last in 1944, shrug tolerantly but with nostalgia too, at the sight of khaki again.

And your neighbor the abbé? With serenity of soul, he has defended his friends and paid his price for principle quietly and now in the hot summer of 1948, jogging along in the subway on his way to preach to the smiling nuns, he looks backward for a bit and comes to know with some surprise that he has had a very happy life.

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BY BRUCE MARSHALL

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Book Business—With and Without Profit

J. K. LASSER

THE letter the young man brought me had a familiar ring. It was from his father, who had made several million dollars manufacturing shoes. It explained that the son, a senior at Yale, was anxious to make a career in book publishing after his graduation. Since my firm does the accounting work for a large number of book houses—large, small, and in-between—the shoe manufacturer hoped that I would be willing to discuss the dollars-and-cents practicability of his son's ambition with him.

"I'd like to start my own firm," the young man explained, "either alone or in partnership with some young fellow with experience in the business who shares my interest in good literature."

"It's a swell idea," I told him, "provided you are willing to kiss a lot of your father's hard-earned dough goodbye."

"Oh, I don't mean a big firm like Macmillan or Doubleday," he assured me quickly. "Just a small house, with a small list of carefully selected pieces of fine writing."

"That will greatly increase your chances of losing your father's money," I told him bluntly. "Just yesterday I was looking over some figures I've collected about the recent operations of the houses whose accounting my firm does. During 1948 one-quarter of the companies on my list—chiefly the smaller ones—lost money. The year before that an equal number, including several of the same firms, had net losses."

The young man acted as if he could take gloomy news, so I opened the folder on my desk and read him more facts.

"Bad as that is," I went on, "it is by no means the whole story. More than half the companies that have been making a profit have done it through income derived from by-products or subsidiary rights. Two out of every three publishers are losing money from the publication of trade books—the books of fiction, non-fiction on popular subjects, books for younger people, and so on, that are sold principally through bookstores."

The man from Yale seemed not only willing, but eager to hear the whole story, and so for an hour I told him just what I had learned about the state of the book trade in the United States today from my vantage point as an accountant for some of its leading houses. I told him that, as I saw it, publishing is a large but ailing business. The latest figures provided by the Census of Manufactures indicate how large it actually is: in 1947 it employed 39,942 people, paid wages of $104,000,000, and its sale of books totaled $463,000,000. Through the years the industry has enjoyed a steady growth. Total sales in 1947 were three times those in 1939. Sales in 1948 were even larger, while those for this year are expected to be almost as high.

The division of the business with which the general public is most familiar, and one of the largest in the industry, is, of course, trade books. During the past decade, sales of books of this type have increased proportionately with those in other categories. In 1948 they were about 15 per cent higher than they were in 1947, and this year's sales have about maintained the 1948 level.

Now, if the sales of trade books are large and growing, why isn't trade-book publishing profitable? Are publishers really worse off than other kinds of business?

Actually, the average rate of earnings of the whole book-publishing industry is far below the level found in other fields. The profit before taxes of all manufacturing enterprises in the United States in 1948 amounted to 10 per cent of their total sales. For communications and allied industries the ratio was 15 per cent. Other branches of publishing were about the same—magazines earned an average of 11 per cent, business publications 15 per cent. These ratios are close to the minimum necessary for a healthy business.

BY COMPARISON, trade-book publishing has been reduced to a frightfully low margin. The total earnings before taxes of all the publishers on my list in 1948 amounted to less than 5 per cent of their total net sales. Nearly half of these profits must be paid to Federal and state governments for income taxes. This leaves the companies with a terribly slim margin—*less than 3 per cent.* Out of it they must pay dividends to

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stockholders, finance a larger volume of business, and try to accumulate some reserve to carry themselves through the difficulties that are certain to appear in the future. In short, trade-book publishing has become a consistently losing business at the very time it has been making new highs in sales volume.

When the average man goes into a bookstore to buy a new book at, say, three dollars, he is apt to think that the price allows a broad margin of profit for the publisher. The fact is that the trade publisher today spends on unavoidable costs more than a dollar for each dollar of his sales. The largest share of every dollar goes to the store—forty cents. This forty cents must help cover the rent and maintenance of the store, the salaries of the clerks, and provide something for the owner. If you know a bookseller, you know that this is not too large an amount. How often have you heard of a wealthy or even prosperous book dealer? Some books reach the dealer through middlemen; discounts to wholesalers amount to another 2 per cent of the sales dollar.

An author must be paid at least ten cents on each dollar his book brings into the stores. The mechanical processes of producing a book—the cost of printing and paper—today total about twenty-seven cents out of each dollar.

Add these costs up and you'll find that this leaves the publisher about twenty-one cents for all other expenses. That twenty-one cents must go a long way. Three and one-half cents will be needed for storage, shipping, and local taxes. Editorial work —manuscript selection, revision, and styling—nowadays runs to about two and one-half cents of the sales dollar. Advertising, promotion, and selling to the stores cost at least eight to ten cents; often this must be raised to twelve or fifteen cents or the book will fail to find buyers. Necessary overhead expenses—rent, office operation, bookkeeping, lawsuits, provision for employee pensions, and all other management expenses—cost the publisher another seven cents of the sales dollar. When the publisher adds up all these expenses he discovers that his expenses now cost him more than his 21 per cent share of the sales income —for some publishers it is considerably more.

Consider how the prices the publisher is having to pay for materials and services have risen above those before the war:

In 1948 the cost of paper was 80 per cent higher than in 1939.

The cost of composition was up 100 per cent.

Electrotypes cost 85 per cent more.

Printing and binding costs rose 75 per cent.

Salary levels were 65 per cent higher.

These five items account for four-fifths of the costs of book publishing other than authors' royalties and booksellers' discounts. The other one-fifth of the costs—rent, furniture, transportation, traveling, advertising, taxes, and the like—have risen altogether by more than 25 per cent.

The combined effect of all these increases is that it now costs 55 to 65 per cent more to manufacture and market the same book in the same quantity than it did in 1939.

To meet the rising costs of the past decade, most businessmen have raised the prices of their product proportionately. But general publishers have not been able to do this because of stiff consumer resistance. Thus, today, they are caught in a trap between costs 55 to 65 per cent higher and a product that sells on an average of only 25 per cent more.

To ameliorate their plight, trade publishers have tried to reduce their production costs by inaugurating various economy devices and by printing larger editions. They have also increased their income through the sale of secondary rights to their publications.

During and since the war the business of the book clubs has been far larger than it was a decade ago. Whenever a club selects a book, the practice is for the publisher to share in the royalty income along with the author. In the past several years there have been a number of instances of small publishing firms saved from bankruptcy by the selection of one of their books by a major book club.

THERE has likewise been a prodigious growth in the reprint business during the past several years —particularly in the twenty-five-cent field. Here again the publisher shares in royalties and here again he has frequently found a godsend.

Although it is customary for publishers to share in the sale of any of their books to the movies, this has not been as much of a help to them as you might expect. Hollywood has been undergoing a painful period of economizing since the end of the war, and the number of books purchased for film purposes has been relatively few. There have been some sales, of course, and these have helped penny-pinched publishers. But income from secondary rights is at best an occasional and auxiliary aid, one which publishers have found by bitter experience that they had better not count on.

One notable way in which publishers have tried to solve their dilemma

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

MORE SIMILES

Olivia S. Wood, of Princeton, N. J., offers twenty similes from well-known poems. Can you tell who or what is being described? Allowing five points for each correct answer, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers are on page 42.

1. Who was "like one forlorn or crazed with care"?
2. Who was "like Niobe, all tears"?
3. What sank "like lead into the sea"?
4. What was "like a poet hidden"?
5. What was "like those Nicean barks of yore"?
6. What "like a yawn of fire from the grass it came"?
7. Who was "like a spruce single man, with a smart double knock"?
8. What sounded "like the beating of the storm waves on a stern and distant shore"?
9. What "like an eagle's nest hangs on the crest"?
10. What ship "like a vessel of glass she stove and sank"?
11. Who was "like some watcher of the skies"?
12. What was "like father's gun only a nation louder"?
13. Who came down "like the wolf on the fold"?
14. What was "like a diamond in the sky"?
15. What shook "like a bowlful of jelly"?
16. Who acted "just like unto a trundling mop or a wild goose at play"?
17. What natural object looked "just like a weasel"?
18. What tasted "like a coat that is rather too tight in the waist"?
19. What was "like a warm white rose"?
20. What heavenly object "like her, O Saki, you shall pass"?

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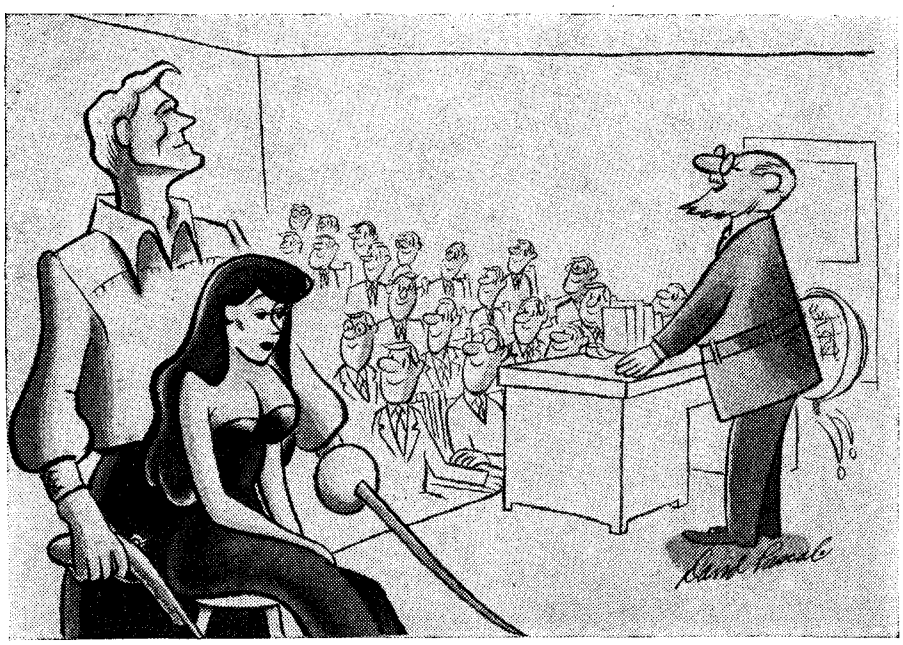
is to print—and if possible sell—larger quantities of each title they issue. In the old days a publisher might—and often did—agree to publish a book which he believed could not possibly sell more than 2,000 or 3,000 copies. It was possible in most cases to break even on a book with a printing as small as that. Moreover, since his share of the book buyer's dollar was not being pinched as sharply, the publisher could afford now and then to indulge in a little altruism—to publish a book that he felt might not actually make a profit, but which would be a critical success, reflecting glory on his house and on the publishing business as a whole. He could afford to take a chance on the work of an unknown author, supported by the hope that the writer might develop a profitable audience through his second or third work. He was willing to publish occasionally a specialized work designed for a limited audience merely because he felt that the work deserved the dignity of print.

Nowadays publishers are finding that they must print at least 7,500 to 10,000 copies of a trade book to break even on it. As I have said, the market for books has multiplied since the war, but even so it is not as easy to sell 10,000 copies of the average book today as it would have been to sell 2,000 to 3,000 copies a decade ago. Even more important, as far as friends of literature and learning are concerned, it is virtually impossible even today to sell 10,000 copies of many excellent books. And with his finances strained by high costs and fixed selling prices, no publisher who intends to remain in business can afford in these times to publish a book purely for prestige. It is an unhappy fact that many books by new authors, many deserving books intended for limited audiences, can no longer be published by trade publishers.

The effort of publishers to mitigate their cost problems has produced another situation which is alarming to me as an accountant. With rising costs, most publishers found it necessary to increase print orders as a means of lowering costs per copy. This has resulted in piling up of larger stocks in publishers' warehouses. A threat now facing the industry is the danger of severe inventory losses unless sales are maintained at current levels—or speeded up.

In 1947 the total inventories of general book publishers amounted to almost 90 per cent of the total capital

(*Continued on page* 39)



"And now, with the generous cooperation of the publishing industry, we will discuss the role of the romantic novel in contemporary literature."

Outliving the Mourners

THE BOOK INDUSTRY. By William Miller. New York: Columbia University Press. 170 *pp.* $2.75.

By Aaron Sussman

MR. MILLER first fluttered the dovecotes six years ago with an objective, if surprising, piece about the book business which appeared in *Fortune*. He has since taken a more personal interest in it, as an American historian with a book on the Macmillan list. Therefore, no one can accuse him of being an outsider—especially the sort who "knows the subject thoroughly from a to b." Mr. Miller does know what he's talking about, and he has developed a restless habit of asking blunt questions.

This time he has surveyed the "changing nature of American publishing" under the most formidable auspices: as part of the Public Library Inquiry initiated two years ago by the American Library Association, under a $200,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation, and with the sponsorship of the Social Science Research Council.

And if all that doesn't impress you, a reading of his book will. For here is the first solid attempt to bring the Cheney Report of twenty years ago up to date. I believe that the sharp-tongued Mr. Cheney would not only have approved most of Mr. Miller's findings, but he would have appreciated the swish of his scimitar. Mr. Miller is not afraid to say what's on his mind. And what he says makes glowing sense.

He points out, for example, that the book business has outlived most of its mourners and will probably continue to do so. In the past, he reminds us, the book industry Cassandras moaned about the pirating of foreign titles, about price cutting, free libraries, book clubs, and twenty-five-cent books, about movies, radio, television, and now high manufacturing costs. But none of these things, it finally occurs to you, ever did as much harm as dull books.

He believes that book buying is a function of book reading, that book reading is a function of education, and, finally, that on the levels which affect book buying, education is a function of income. In other words, too many people are cut off from the book market by lack of money. An obvious fact, of course, but too often forgotten in the discussions among book men.

He ponders the fact that a famous Chicago bookseller recently invested his surplus savings (all of it made by selling books) in real estate instead of in more bookshops. It's, as they say in Brooklyn, a question.

He comments on the strange see-saw which tilts university presses into the blue sky of trade publishing (the publishing of books for mass sale) while trade publishers woo financial

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security in the good earth of college departments.

With a twinkle in his eye, he notes that sex is a staple trade-book subject and "sells well in any literary form."

He is amused by the highbrow label for trade publishers as "businessmen trafficking in books," and by the lowbrow label for them as "bookish men in business." Is it possible that he feels they are neither?

Despite what publishers have told him in personal interviews about depending for their profits on extra rights (such as book clubs, reprints, magazine digests, movies, and so on), he just doesn't believe it. He thinks their bookkeeping is at fault. And he is worried about what may happen, and is happening, to publishing as a result of these accounting practices.

He has some uneasy things to say about the danger of having American literature *sindlingerized* (from the Albert F. Sindlinger audience-research organization, which polls the public via recorded digests of an author's work, and an electrical gadget which produces a composite reaction graph, called Tildox). "So Dear to My Heart," by Sterling North, who refers affectionately to the Sindlinger Tildox as "the collective wisdom of the American people," was supposed to have been produced this way.

One of Mr. Miller's footnotes reveals a formula for the success of such best sellers as "Anthony Adverse," "Gone with the Wind," "Forever Amber," "The King's General," "Green Light," "The Keys of the Kingdom," "The Song of Bernadette," "The Rose," and "The Miracle of the Bells." It also explains why "The Big Fisherman" was bound to outsell "The Naked and the Dead."

Among other things which he discusses are these: why Europeans buy more books than we do, why publishers and editors are rarely women; why purely trade publishing is done only by small houses; whether book-club sales destroy reprint sales; that statistics about the industry are still as scarce as they were in Cheney's day; what booms do to the book business; the shifting of editorial responsibilities in publishing houses and what it means; what effect libraries have on publishing and bookselling, and what the demands of the new markets (such as movies and book clubs) are doing to authors, publishers, and booksellers.

If you write, publish, or sell books (and to some extent if you just read them), you will find plenty to think about, worry about, and be glad about, in the pages of this book. It is indexed and has an appendix with many vital statistics.

The World.

Perhaps the most persuasive testimony to the importance of America in the world today can be found by leafing through the pages of foreign newspapers. There, day after day, news of the USA is chronicled in the fullest detail. Such news is printed not because of idle interest, but because the actions of this country must determine, in large measure, the future course of world history. How do Americans measure up to this responsibility? What are the problems they must solve? It is to such questions as these that "Years of the Modern," which we review below, addresses itself. In this symposium, which is subtitled "An American Appraisal," twelve experts attempt to take a creative inventory of our times. . . . One immediate problem which faces us is the fact of a Communist China. Jack Belden's "China Shakes the World" gives a vivid, factual report of life behind the Communist lines.

Appraising Ourselves at Mid-Century

YEARS OF THE MODERN. Edited by John W. Chase. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 340 *pp.* $3.50.

By Lyman Bryson

THIS book is a consultation on American life. The doctors do not agree but they all expect better times in our national future. Our distraught economy seems to have a future, our distracted souls are finding examples of courage, and our institutions still work. Faith and energy will be needed. Henry Steele Commager begins the symposium with applicable, but predictable, adjectives on the nature of the typical American and he is followed by Alan Barth with an analysis of our method of freedom. We are warned by Frank Ernest Hill's prefatory notes and the publisher's foreword that "several score persons," for more than a year, have been working at a creative inventory of our times and we may begin to wonder if this is just another publisher's enterprise. What Commager and Barth have to say about peace later on, are all readily available in the words of these or similar sound writers in other places. Did the eighty persons creatively rub out all their differences and reach a level of well-accepted truths? Or did they exclude awkwardly creative expressions of opinion from their inventory in the hope of making an impression of final synthesis? As one reads on, the prospect brightens.

The discussion picks up, in sprightliness and point, when Walton Hamilton begins the third essay, "The Genius of the Radical." Hamilton is a first-rate realistic economist, as well as several other things, and he has radical ideas about what is really radical in American life. He finds it in industrial enterprise. "The free market," he says, "allows the adventurer to crash the gate. It makes bold ideas the price of success." Adventurers, of course, have a bad habit of getting more than their share of the goods; anti-trust laws and regulating commissions are a natural consequence. Big business challenges social control and has its own ways of suppressing radical invention. In Hamilton's opinion, "at the moment, the drive for regulation and the rule of the corporate imperium have united to create a crisis which threatens to destroy the radical and deny to American society his genius." There is something freshly old-fashioned about this warning.

Alvin Johnson, who then follows with "The Fate of a Skeptic," is also vigorous and eloquent as he reaffirms his own faith in our virtues. What is getting to be commonplace and even suspected among us is still new in the world. "But in one point—the crucial point, I think,—our civilization differs radically from that of Rome, and from all other civilizations that have perished. That is our concern for the masses of the population. . . ." In fact, the underlying population is taking over. The trend is general; the most effective form of the new order is

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the Welfare State, as we have had it since Franklin Roosevelt.

A reasonably watchful reader might begin to be slightly puzzled at this point. Is Hamilton, with his acid reminders of the spirit of 1776, offering us the same picture of American life and destiny that Johnson does? Hamilton warns us against present restraints on inventive genius. Johnson sees the greatest creative period in history ahead of us, when the governmental interventions of the Welfare State will give the common man his chance. Perhaps with more space they might have brought their ideas into closer harmony.

David Riesman, who takes the American soul apart to get a good look at it, and J. K. Galbraith, who scrutinizes our economy more closely, help to bring things together, although one cannot be sure that either Hamilton or Johnson, representing two sides of an older liberal tradition, is in agreement with either one of them. Riesman describes most Americans as helplessly "other-directed." We depend on external authority, all of us except for the "saving remnant" who can still call their souls their own. In the same history where Alvin Johnson sees the inevitable and glorious rise of the common man to his hegemony and self-realization, Riesman sees, even in democratic countries, a change which has made the state "so overwhelming that even martyrdom—the last despairing appeal of the individual human spirit against the group—is no longer possible." Most of us want to escape from freedom; only a few have courage. Is the Welfare State a mirage of safety for those who are afraid to go on their own? Or is it the new condition in which independence will be recaptured? The interstitial notes in this book do not say.

Galbraith, who has a distinguished record as a New Deal-Welfare State official, shows more than do most of the contributors what we have always thought of as one of the typical American traits, a cool, informed common sense. He is about as free of dogma as a positive man can get. He believes with Johnson that the growth of government in Western countries in recent years has been accompanied by a change of government intentions from malevolence to good will. But he is not afraid of large-scale private enterprise and he expects the struggle between big government and big business to go on. In the meantime, we shall get on fairly well because the basic technological problems are solved anyhow, and in a context like ours almost any system could be made to work fairly well. So Galbraith swings us back again to a relaxed optimism.

—Burck in Chicago-Sun-Times.

"Lead Kindly Light."

Perry Miller is also among the optimists. He has well-documented doubts about some phases of American education but he thinks the schools are still the best means we have of keeping our inventiveness alive and to that end he urges teachers to hold on to their own freedom. Harrison Brown issues the kind of warning we have come to expect from socially sensitive makers of atom bombs. Erwin D. Canham urges us to be more vigorous in getting our ideas into European and Asiatic heads and General C. T. Lanham describes a kind of American army very different from what we have been told about soldiering by our young novelists.

The last essay in the book, well placed because it does more for synthesis than the others, is the account of his own re-education by Norman Cousins. He was a member of an unhappy generation and his American education did not give him a very clear picture of America, either as it was or as it should be. The war did that work. New powers of destruction compelled him to find an ultimately adequate frame of action which he discovered in working toward world government. The "Years of the Modern," then, come out in the thinking of a serious and sensitive young mind as the years in which America has to accept leadership in uniting the world in practical peace. There are hints in the other essays that indicate what right we have to take such leadership and what qualities there are in the American character that others might try to imitate. After some deliberation on the variety, the unevenness, and the energy of these twelve essays, one is inclined to accept with contentment the idea of the modern American as a character so complex and free that only a polyphonal voice can speak for him. The older cultures have wanted too much shape and uniformity in human life.

Koestler & Israel

PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT. By Arthur Koestler. New York: The Macmillan Co. 335 pp. $4.

By Thomas Sugrue

THE Palestine story from 1917 to 1949 is an allergy test for the emotions of an historian; the most objective of men, examining its parts, have found themselves alternating between rage and melancholy, lapsing occasionally into a cynicism they mistake for perspective. Arthur Koestler, in addition to submitting his adrenals and myocardium to the steady pricks of British colonial and foreign policy, Arab political intransigeance, and Zionist idealism, has exposed himself to another hazard; he has endeavored to examine Palestime under the Mandate from what he calls a "psychosomatic" point of view. The result is a noisy, uneven book, in which the author races up and down a ladder of attitudes, shouting from one rung, peering into the distance from another, and muttering to himself while standing on a third. The reader finds himself watching, not the epic of the return to Zion, but the man who is telling him the tale. It is, to choose a mild word, confusing.

In view of this predicament the average person approaching the book will find it helpful to read the epilogue first. In this ultimate section Mr. Koestler discusses the meaning of Israel for Jews in other parts of the world, particularly those content with their situation and innocent of any urge to emigrate to the new homeland of their people. From the moment the State of Israel became a reality there existed, for the first time in 2,000 years, a way of escape for Jews who did not wish to be Jews. During the long centuries of the Diaspora, when the Jew carried his state with him, there could be no emigration—the Jew who tried to assimilate was running away from himself. After May 14, 1948, the situation was reversed; the Jew who lived outside Israel and was not orthodox in religion faced the curious fact that he was a Jew without definition, subject to discrimination and persecution for a "differentness" which no longer existed. Mr. Koestler examines this point fully and expresses this opinion:

> The conclusion is that since the foundation of the Hebrew state the attitude of Jews who are unwilling to go there, yet insist on remaining a community in some way apart from their fellow citizens, has become an untenable anachronism. . . . Now that the mission of the Wandering Jew is completed, he

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must discard the knapsack and cease to be an accomplice in his own destruction. If not for his own sake, then for that of his children and his children's children. The fumes of the death chambers still linger over Europe; there must be an end to every calvary.

Since Mr. Koestler is not a citizen of Israel, and is now in France working on a novel, it is obvious that he has abandoned the knapsack.

> These conclusions [he says], reached by one who has been a supporter of the Zionist movement for a quarter-century, while his cultural allegiance belonged to Western Europe, are mainly addressed to the many others in a similar situation. They have done what they could to secure a haven for the homeless in the teeth of prejudice, violence, and political treachery. Now that the State of Israel is firmly established, they are free at last to do what they could *not do before: to wish it good luck* and go their own way. . . .

With this in mind the reader is equipped to follow Mr. Koestler through the devious paths which lead from the Balfour Declaration to the vote in the United Nations Assembly on November 29, 1947, when the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states was approved. The sequence of events is difficult to follow under any circumstances—drama, chicanery, and heroics are packed into those thirty years like bandage on a wound—and it is easier to keep an eye on Mr. Koestler, who selects what suits his purpose, comments, or submits a conclusion, and moves on, studying the Jews of Palestine as "a specimen of humanity to be examined under the social microscope." Now and then the microscope gets turned around and Mr. Koestler finds that he is examining himself.

The first part of the book is devoted to the background of the Mandate. The gentiles who sponsored the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine were, as Mr. Koestler points out, Bible readers—Wilson, Lloyd George, Balfour, etc. The men assigned to carry out the Mandate were members of the civil service, colonial servants who found the Jews less attractive than the easy-going, colorful, backward Arabs; the Foreign Office responsible for British policy in the Middle East considered Arab friendship more important than Jewish allegiance. Gradually Arab pressure on England forced a showdown, and when it came, in 1939, the British abandoned the Jews, issued the infamous White Paper forbidding all but a trickle of immigration to Palestine, and thus condemned the Jews in Europe to death by cutting off their last way of escape. The Mandate from the beginning had been difficult to administer, since the Arabs claimed they had been promised the land given to Jews, but had the national home been peopled by gentiles the story might well have been different. Mr. Koestler believes that the great sin of the Jews, as Dr. Weizmann pointed out, is that they exist. In the end this fact seems to have pushed the British into an attitude of stubbornness, so that they backed the Arabs to the hilt, sure their Moslem friends would overrun the new state in a few weeks.

It was a wrong guess, militarily; when Mr. Koestler arrived at Haifa

in June 1948, the Israeli Army was more than holding its own against the invading Arabs. He visited old friends, went to a few quiet points along the front, and listened to anecdotes of the early battles. Excerpts from his diary comprise this section of the book, along with quotations from his newspaper dispatches, written at the time. It is a sloppy bit of reporting, poorly organized, loaded with pointless personal details. Here Koestler is definitely the central theme of the book, and Israel and the war are lost to the reader. In the final section the author takes the stand and delivers his now familiar opinions on the new state. He wants the Hebrew alphabet latinized; he wants the orthodox clergy to clear out of politics; he wants the Eastern Jews who dominate the Israeli Government to Westernize their methods and point of view.

Perhaps the book was hastily written; if so, it should have been rewritten. Its style is a mixture of slang, psychological terminology, and political jargon. Its middle section, which is the heart of the story, is inexcusably bad. After a fashion it tells the Palestine story from 1917 to 1949; it should be filed, however, under K for Koestler, not I for Israel.

People in Ferment

CHINA SHAKES THE WORLD. By Jack Belden. New York: Harper & Bros. 524 pp. $5.

By Richard E. Lauterbach

JACK BELDEN has written one of the best books ever published about the Chinese people. It is a source book of such consequence that no diplomat, historian, businessman, or wishful thinker can fully comprehend what has happened in China, and why, until he has read "China Shakes the World." If John Reed's "Ten Days that Shook the World" had been as rich and detailed in its newsreel of the Russian Revolution as Jack Belden's documentary of China's, the average citizen as well as assorted foreign offices might have been spared many dangerous misconceptions.

Few writers are as well equipped as Jack Belden to make an explosion of history as exciting as a novel of suspense. John Hersey did it for the atom bomb; Belden has done it for the Chinese Revolution. To accomplish this he had to be a fine craftsman and an amazingly perceptive reporter with a deep understanding of men and politics. Belden had these assets, plus a background of contact with the Chinese that made him the perfect instrument to interpret China's upheaval to the West.

In 1933 Belden, an Able-Bodied Seaman, jumped ship in Hongkong to see the Orient in a couple of weeks. He stayed nine years, learning snatches of the Chinese language, marching with Chinese troops, sharing rice bowls with them, noting signs of the developing internal struggle. In 1946 he returned to China, an established war correspondent and writer with a personal legend half-Hemingway, half-Lothario. Avoiding the populous port cities and the Communist mecca, Yenan ("a tourist center"), Belden took off for the Communist-controlled regions of the North China plain by truck and mule cart.

Behind the changing lines of the Civil War, Belden lived and talked with the people—Communists, non-Communists, anti-Communists—and in understanding them and their experiences, understood China and the revolution which the people, themselves, were making. In his account of that revolution Belden has re-created not only his own adventures but the lives of many dozens of unforgettable Chinese: a wandering beggar writer, a revengeful farm wife, a village landlord, a guerrilla assassin, a young Communist cadre, a power-

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mad general, a philosophic teacher, a traitorous spy, and so on.

From their stories emerges a colorful mosaic of Chinese society, a magnificent picture with all the myriad of shadings and shapes that only a skilled artist-reporter could achieve. In this total portrait of a people in ferment are the real answers to all the rhetorical questions in the U. S. "white paper" on China. Why did Chiang collapse? Why didn't his troops fight? How Chinese are the Chinese Communists? What do they believe in? Have they captured the imagination and loyalty of the peasants? If so, how? Will they be likely to hold them? How do the Chinese feel about Americans? Russians? What do the Chinese want anyhow?

Although the answers to these points, and many more which will arise in years to come, are in Belden's book, he has not written a conventional political treatise. There is no opinion offered which is not completely substantiated by experience. Even those who have never read a book about China and don't give a damn about politics will want to buy "China Shakes the World" for individual chapters crammed with sufficient atmosphere and intrigue for half a dozen novels. For example, there's the vividly described "Mission Murder"; Belden takes the reader along on a midnight raid to murder a vicious landlord. There's the saga of Gold Flower, a tale of young love, forced marriage, disillusionment, cruelty, civil war, and resurrection. Belden has packed the history of the new China's sexual revolution into this one powerful and dramatic narrative.

If this book were any less exciting, any less important, a reviewer would have to warn about its price, its length, its small but readable typography. But considering the amount of information, wit, and wisdom the author has put between the covers, these complaints are trivial.

Here in one book is the paradox of China, the stench and beauty, the brutality and tenderness, the idealism and the conniving, the battles between brother and brother, between young and old. Here is our window on what happens when a great people are caught up in a "convulsive mass passion" that is as much a turning point in this generation as atomic fission.

The only solution to the riddle of China is to understand it. The quickest way to do that is to read "China Shakes the World."

Richard E. Lauterbach is author of "Danger from the East," "These Are the Russians," and "Through Russia's Back Door."

Fiction. *Among this week's crop Henry Green's "Loving" gives the reader the pleasure of discovering a new talent, or at least one new to this side of the Atlantic. This wartime story of the lives and loves of the English servants on an estate in Ireland is original in conception and in style and has the charm of spontaneity and precise writing. John Kelly's second novel, "Alexander's Feast," is concerned with esthetes who live in baroque splendor in a New England Senator's mansion, a perverse world to discover in today's fiction. Harold Robbins's "The Dream Merchants" can be read as a more than fictional account of the rise of the movies from the primitive nickelodeon to the Wall-Street-controlled film factories of today. Charles O'Neill's "Morning Time" is an unusually factual novel of the Wilkinson Conspiracy to prevent the ratification of the Constitution of the United States in 1787. Its authenticity is somewhat marred by the conventional erotic patterns of the historical novel.*

Once Upon a Day in an Emerald Estate

LOVING. By Henry Green. New York: The Viking Press. 248 pp. $3.

By JOHN WOODBURN

THE other night a full-grown moon came climbing the sky out of Goshen and spilled its light like a thin snowfall over the farm where I still sit at the death-bed of summer. I had had no warning; I simply opened the door and looked out and saw it, the color of milk and silver all around. Barn and granary, wrinkled road, tranced tree, and flattening grass, all had been subjected to a delicate distortion, a white disguise. I could see where the moonlight was falling, but I could not see it fall; and I could see where it had fought with the shadow, and lost, and where, in a pale triumph, it had won. Everything was there, and where it should be; everything was the same, and everything was oddly different. The focus was not lost, only changed, and all the familiar objects and aspects had been caught and transfigured in a prism of light.

I have begun with that paragraph in a kind of desperation, because I wanted to find some way of defining, or at least suggesting, if I could, the extraordinary quality, the curious light which suffuses this novel called "Loving," by an English author who has chosen to write under the colorless name of Henry Green. His publishers tell us only that Mr. Green "has a passion for anonymity, and Green is not actually his name. Very little is known about his personal life except that he is in private life a prominent Birmingham manufacturer." "Loving," the first of his novels to be published in this country, was written several years ago, and is one of seven, all titled with the greatest abruptness and economy: "Living," "Caught," "Party Going," "Blindness," "Back," and "Concluding"—titles which sound like a game of categories, but a form of compression which, while perhaps not so naive as it sounds, has a refreshing directness after the free association practised in such matters by some of Mr. Green's contemporaries.

But I am not nearly so interested in who Henry Green really is or what he manufactures in Birmingham as I am in the fact that he can write with such a fresh and seeming artlessness and still effect, as he does in "Loving," a novel of such delicate and precise architecture. He has the kind of casual daring that Emily Dickinson had, the inspired unruliness which unhesitatingly breaks the rule that

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sets the image free. "Once upon a day," his novel begins, like a new fairy tale, "Once upon a day an old butler called Eldon lay dying in his room attended by the head housemaid, Miss Agatha Burch. From time to time the other servants separately or in chorus gave expression to proper sentiments and then went on with what they had been doing. One name he uttered over and over, 'Ellen,'" And, like an old fairy tale, and given the exact note of gentle mockery by its precise displacement, his novel ends with: "Over in England they were married and lived happily ever after."

Between this beginning and ending, between the sound of these bell-like sentences, Mr. Green places his enchantment over the lives and loves of the servants' hall on an estate in Ireland. English servants, brought by Mrs. Tennant to Kinalty to escape the bombings and the rationing and the threat of invasion, they are no more at home or at ease in Ireland than house mice in a meadow. And they scuttle about the halls of Kinalty like accepted mice, squabbling and kissing in corners, making off with a delicacy here and there out of the pantry, the underhousemaids, Edie and Kate, squeaking like mice and smothering their giggles in their attic dormitory; and above-stairs Mrs. T. chatters sweetly and vaguely and mislays her rings while Violet, her young daughter-in-law, spends her days in a tremble of terror lest her love affair with the reckless Captain Davenport become known to all. It is Raunce who is the hero of sorts, a petulant and pompous tyrant, at Eldon's death become butler and making the most of it at every moment; a middle-aged, fustian hero who bullies his whey-faced pantryboy and is racked by greed, dyspepsia, his dithering love for Edie, and a guilty feeling that he should by rights be back in London doing his bit with the Home Guard. There are other mice, too, below-stairs at Kinalty: Miss Swift, who had been Miss Violet's nanny, and had had children about her for so long that she tended to lose touch with adults; there is a housekeeper of great outward virtue and a deft way with a gin bottle; and Paddy, the only indigenous one, a moony, silent, dirty man who cared tenderly for the peacocks and for little else, although Kate, the desperate housemaid, threw herself at him more than once.

Not much of any great importance happens in this story, but many little things happen, which seem of great moment in the small world in which these lives are lived. There are commonplace incidents which Henry Green manages to endow with a cold and instant beauty: the housemaids, lazing at their work, waltzing with a sardonic grace in the great deserted ballroom of Kinalty, and Raunce stealing upon them suddenly in a wordless excitement; a picnic on the beach on a wild and windy day, with Kate and Edie, yearning and excited by the weather, teasing the timid pantry-boy while Violet's two intact and beautiful small children watch with the terrible wisdom of innocence; and a scene, at once Gothic and delicate and bold, in which Kate rouses the snoring, tree-like Paddy, slumbering near his jealous peacocks.

It is very difficult to describe this book in terms of any other, and I have never read any book that is quite like it. The author seems to use nothing anyone has used before, to write with a technique that is so casual, so spontaneous, that at first impression he appears to have abandoned all technique. His dialogue, which has a fine, true breathlessness and furnishes much of the bone of the story, is, on closer scrutiny, a cunning blend of idiom and poetic overtone. Henry Green, whoever he is, is an original, who has made his own kind of writing, the kind of writing that lies like white moonlight over the familiar commonplaces of his story, and transforms them into new and strange and lovely things.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 332

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 332 will be found in the next issue.

CVOOZSXQ YB GKUSXQ,

GO ROKB XYD DRO

KSBI PYYDCDOZC YP

DRO CDBKXQO DRSXQC

DRKD KVWYCD RKZZOX.

—X. RKGDRYBXO.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 331

Individualities may form communities, but it is institutions alone that can create a nation.

—DISRAELI.

Gentle Triangle

IT WAS LIKE THIS. By Anne Goodwin Winslow. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 223 pp. $2.50.

By EVELYN EATON

IT WAS with a sense of pleasurable shock, a rare delight, and a clean, crisp excitement that I finished Mrs. Winslow's book. "It Was Like This" is the sort of novel almost impossible to lay the hand on nowadays, the good book which is also pleasant reading, the sort of novel for a rainy day by the fire, or a day in bed with a slight cold, or to read aloud to your assorted family before going up the stairs to bed. In other words, it is a novel in refreshingly good taste, about men who do not spend their days in bars and their nights in brothels or in dirtier places, and women who are not, in one form or another, accommodation girls.

In spite of the fact that it isn't crude or coarse, there is nothing namby or pamby or of middle-class-morality about the book. It conveys intense emotion. Its reticence evokes a love more real in three lines than many pages of descriptive sex-stuff between guys and dames. (Not that sex isn't fun. Rather that those of us who happen to have pleasant and personal associations with it, can read this book without gagging.)

"It Was Like This" deals with an old situation, the love of two brothers for the same girl. There are well-drawn subsidiary characters, Olie, and her father John Coujac, Olie's baby, Jackson the editor, Mrs. Middleton, who had a French grandmother from whom she drew wisdom, and Mrs. Martin who loved all three children, but Hugh the most.

Mrs. Martin "had loved her husband and gone with him unfalteringly into the shadows that had engulfed their world"—the shadows of Southern Mississippi in the late nineteenth century—"but her father's star had set in different skies and she saw it rise again in Hugh," her younger son. Hugh loved his brother Lawrence's wife, Anna, with a love "outside of his control"—a thing "with a life of its own, that would have to be strangled—stabbed—drugged, to keep it quiet." The development of Hugh's love for Anna, the effect it has upon her and her husband and the close-knit family, are the theme of the book.

Mrs. Winslow gives the reader to understand that even with the thought of Lawrence, even with renunciation (that unfashionable absurdity) there will remain a depth of living worth while for all three.

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Fateful Years in Europe

THE HAPPY GENERATION. By Ferenc Körmendi. New York: Crown Publishers. 635 *pp.* $3.50.

By Robert Pick

WITH the break-up of Continental society, the traditional European *Entwicklungsroman* met its crisis. The stable historical backdrop that served the classics of that genre had to give way to a stage of continual social and historical change. Thus a new, hybrid genre came into being which is at once both a social and an historical novel.

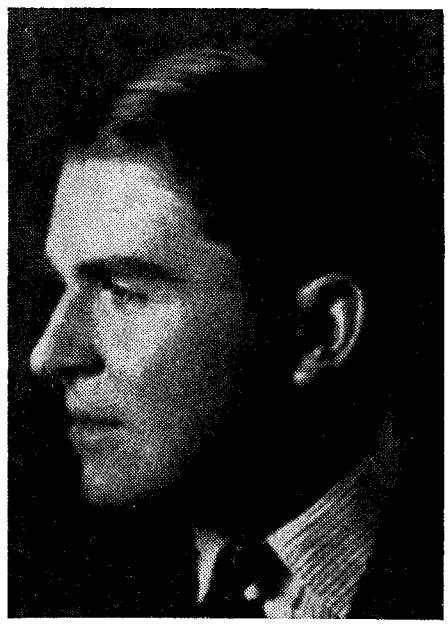
In one section of the present book —published fifteen years ago in its author's native Hungary—this two-fold character is beautifully integrated. Accompanying his stepmother (and former governess), little Paul Hegedüs has gone to a fashionable Belgian sea resort. The pretty young woman, married to a prosperous, dignified Budapest physician, enjoys herself tremendously. A real baron makes up to her. But this is the late summer of 1914. Clara Hegedüs does not want to admit the heavy clouds gathering over Europe. Little Paul, sensing the attraction the cheap man-about-town exerts on his stepmother, cannot understand it. And while the approaching deluge forces its reality on a woman who claims her right to what she considers happiness, the unbelieving child gets a first inkling of the grown-ups' world and of a woman's failing loyalty. This part of the story, presented astutely and with much accurate and no less dramatic detail, comes close to being a classic.

In fact, the parts of Mr. Körmendi's novel that deal with his hero's growing up are very good throughout. Nor does the author disappoint his readers in describing the impact of the war on Central European society in general, and on Dr. Hegedüs's class in particular. Though Mr. Körmendi—as many others before him—in order to keep abreast of history frequently compresses its events into a short paragraph suggesting a news release rather than a novelist's narrative, he yet succeeds in re-creating the atmosphere of those fateful years.

He does equally well by the turmoil and the bewilderment of the postwar period. But in this part Paul Hegedüs himself no longer commands the reader's interest equally well. His health fails, he spends a couple of years at a Swiss sanitarium, and there has a love affair with a middle-aged American woman, only to become, very shortly after her death, her daughter's lover. Cured, he is engulfed by the Berlin life of the wild late Twenties. His studies seem to be rather perfunctory. Yet, back in Budapest, he is transformed into an industrious bank clerk and even makes a career. The search for personal happiness which makes Paul withdraw from his wife, his success as executive, and finally from the whole way of life his father's generation has known—that conflict, though involving a number of dramatic turns, leaves one reader at least fairly cold.

Still, here is a rich novel, brimful of *choses vues*, at once earnest and diverting, sincere, and far from nihilistic. The translation is fine. Mr. Körmendi's publishers are to be congratulated for introducing an interesting novelist to the American public.

Ferenc Kormendi—"*Choses vues.*"



John Kelly—"modern 'Satyricon.'"

Of Love and Death

ALEXANDER'S FEAST. By John Kelly. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 303 *pp.* $3.

By Richard McLaughlin

RISKING preciousness, John Kelly has for his second fictional work written a brilliant tour de force or conversation piece on the classic themes of love and death and immortality. Mr. Kelly has assembled an extremely self-conscious company of actors, who never become anything more than brittle figures on a classical landscape. They only exist for the length of their fine speeches, no longer. Actually, what I think he is trying to achieve here is a sort of modern "Satyricon," guiding us among a group of decadent patricians today. Perhaps where he fails is in thinking he could successfully inject a Latin or pagan spirit into the frosty New England scene. He has set his stage lavishly but his production, with Corinthian columns, artificial lakes, baroque pavilions, elegant men and women framed by Palladio, and all bathed in moonlight madness, never comes off. Still, there is something quite tantalizing, even captivating in Mr. Kelly's riddle about beauty and wisdom and the follies of their pursuants, if only because his writing reminds us of Cabell's "Jurgen."

"Alexander began to hum a waltz tune. 'Hang up philosophy! Bring garlands, music, wine. Forget the morrow, and let us, as the Bible instructs us, abide in sin. How else, save through sin, shall we know grace? Answer me that riddle, my scholar—.'" Who, unless it be a twentieth-century Petronius—and John Kelly appears to be very much in line for the title of "Arbiter Elegantiarum" among our present-day novelists—would try to stage such an audacious, deliberately sardonic commedia dell' arte on an American multi-millionaire's New England estate?

Mr. Kelly has gone out of his way to find a group of esthetes in our modern age whose love of beauty and artistic pursuits are almost undistinguishable from their luxuries, private vices, and social manners. For his modern Nero he has chosen a wealthy, sybaritic, bored, middle-aged politician, Alexander Orville; his decadent court or puppet audience consisting of his beautiful "iceberg" second wife, Norma, her "boringly beautiful" lover, Paul, and Paul's cousin, Stephen, his "first lord of the bed-chamber," whose rhetorical outbursts rather set the pace of court life at Newstead. "'O Cruelty, O

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frailty, you are hard ones,' Stephen broke in. 'Who is here to cry. My love has made me effeminate? You will not bestow any mercy on the unfortunate, the unloved. Only a dead sailor can move us!' "

Into this rarified atmosphere comes Alexander's nineteen-year-old daughter, Adele, a stranger in their midst. Judging them by the rules of the outside world, she can only look on her father's household as people whom life has passed by. Her erratic father is a "mystery best not to be probed." But unwittingly Adele falls in love with Paul, thereby altering the destinies of this odd menage.

No Roman palace was ever built to give fuller rein to its depraved emperor's capacity for nonsense and mischief, for destruction and confusion. Yet visitors reluctantly had to admit that despite its affected elegance Newstead provoked memories of school-day studies, engravings of those temples of Zeus and Paestum. Some could even see Alexander and his classical symbols as subject for a painting to be entitled "Edward Gibbon Seated in the Ruins of the Forum." Of Senator Orville, himself, we find ourselves asking whether he is a poseur or genius, charlatan or benevolent patron of the arts.

"Among us the women never had a chance," says Alexander to his minion, Paul. This remark rather sums up the entire subtle commentary of the book. Certainly it throws light on that "male alliance" at Newstead which Norma senses but is too practical and unimaginative to recognize as relevant to the design of their lives. It is not until it is much too late that she discovers her mistake.

It is here we see how really hard Mr. Kelly has been on the women in his tale. Norma and Adele are made out to be dull if not stupid, their only real function a decorative one; they are seldom expected to know one poet or scholar from another. Mr. Kelly is exploring an enervated male world, a region where homosexuality is, for the most part, sublimated. Perversions, with the exception of an occasional nocturnal expedition to a secret revel or orgy, are confined to refined tastes in rococo paintings, exotic blooms, Renaissance vases, Dresden shepherdesses.

Still, we have only to turn to Alexander's own credo: "I am of another race that sings in its private anguish. I do not understand the laws. I am utterly lacking in the moral sense.—There is no beauty without a touch of strangeness in it—," to understand that Mr. Kelly may intend us to have fun, but that all the antics in his ironic comedy are far from mad or silly, after all.

Celluloid Moguls

THE DREAM MERCHANTS. By Harold Robbins. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 496 *pp.* $3.50.

By Budd Schulberg

IN TERMS of chronology, geography, and the number of its printed pages, "The Dream Merchants" is by far the most ambitious novel ever to be fashioned around the American motion-picture industry.

Like Cedric Belfrage's "The Promised Land," that informed but inorganic fictionalized history of Hollywood, Harold Robbins's second novel doesn't limit itself to any single character or phase of film culture but seeks its unity in the entire sweep of motion-picture development from the independent nickelodeon days of 1908 to the Wall Street-dominated, film-factory, giant-theatre-chain days of 1938.

Robbins has obviously researched his subject thoroughly—if occasionally with references slightly askew—and the pattern of his fiction closely parallels that of film history itself. For his principal characters the author has chosen a credible pair: Peter Kessler, the timid, gentle, hardware-store owner from Rochester who finds himself a film pioneer without quite knowing why or how, and his go-getting young partner, Johnny Edge, the boy "with movie making in his blood," who represents the aggressive, inventive, gambling element that hustled the flickers out of the shoe stores and the penny-arcades and into the resplendent movie palaces of the Twenties and Thirties.

The struggle of these partners, in the early days against the stand-pat policies and restrictive opposition of the Motion Picture Combine (as the author calls the Patents Company), in later days against the New York investors who once more threaten their independence, is in its essence a challenging, revealing story of American growth. Whatever his shortcomings, Robbins is to be commended for venturing into this unlit corner of industrial pioneering.

In so far as Kessler; Johnny Edge; the Greek theatre man, Pappas; the old film-maker, William Borden, and a number of others are quickly recognizable as actual figures in flimsy disguise, readers within "the industry"—as Hollywood likes to refer to itself—may take this book to their hearts as an affectionate inside job and a dignified answer to those callow novelists who dare to suggest that Hollywood is less than it might be.

Paradoxically, its verisimilitude is a source of weakness as well as strength, for while the upward climb of immigrant shopkeepers to positions of power in the industry of mass entertainment makes colorful history and entertaining reading, Mr. Robbins never quite succeeds in re-creating them as vital fictional characters. With the partial exception of Johnny Edge, these dream merchants are seen from the outside and characterized in such broad strokes as to qualify as types rather than individuals. Since they are drawn from actuality, they are true types and therefore help to create the flavor of authenticity that assures this book of a place above the Hollywood potboilers. Yet—to underline our paradox—the characters who are most "true to life" are the least life-like, an esthetic irony Henry James among others has called to our attention. It is almost as if the author were to say of Peter Kessler, for instance, "He's a conservative, small-town, family-loving, Jewish immigrant who—oh well, you *know*, he's really——," and then, catching himself, hurries on to the major steps in ——'s career without buckling down to the novelist's job of developing a three-dimensional Peter Kessler for those who have never known a film mogul.

The drama inherent in the efforts of embattled independents bucking the Combine with bootleg product might have been presented more boldly while still remaining within the confines of historical accuracy. Perhaps in an effort to avoid melodrama, Robbins has failed to suggest the real violence of the clash.

That Robbins has put in ten years with the business office of a major film corporation seems to explain why

(Continued on page 27)

—*Tec.*

Harold Robbins—"an unlit corner of industrial pioneering."

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The War.

Another of America's wartime leaders has published his story of World War II. "Global Mission" comes from no less a figure than H. H. Arnold, who was Commanding General of the Army Air Forces and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As our reviewer points out below, Arnold was always known as "Hap," and this gives a key to his personality, which was effervescent, earthy, and sometimes even downright undiplomatic—qualities which are well mirrored in his book of reminiscences. "Global Mission" deals primarily with our war against the Axis, but it is concerned also with Arnold's own war with the Army and Navy to secure a powerful Air Force. . . . The fourth volume in Samuel Eliot Morison's history of the U. S. Navy in World War II chronicles our two great Naval victories of 1942, Coral Sea and Midway. These actions robbed Admiral Yamamoto of his one chance for victory.

"Hap," General of the Air Force

GLOBAL MISSION. By H. H. Arnold. New York: Harper & Bros. 625 pp. $5.

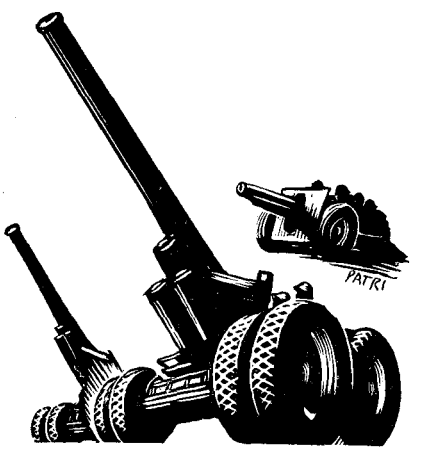
By St. Clair McKelway

AS THE Commanding General of the Army Air Forces and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during World War II Arnold was unquestionably one of the most important figures in that war. This is his book; its virtues, as well as its faults, may be attributed to the fact that it was written by Arnold and by nobody else.

I have been told, on the best authority, that Arnold dictated a draft of several hundreds of thousands of words about a year and a half ago and then asked some of his former public-relations officers what to do with it. "Get a professional writer to make a book out of it," he was advised. A man who had been accustomed, throughout his career, to seek the best available advice and then to do what he thought best, Arnold got a *non*-professional writer—described in a foreword as "my good friend, William R. Laidlaw, formerly Lieutenant Colonel, Eighth and Ninth Air Forces"—to help him slash and whittle the mass of words that had been dictated. The words in the book, however, are clearly Arnold's own and it is equally apparent that the discursive and loosely organized manner in which his story is presented is also Arnold's own. Readers accustomed to the slick veneer that frequently is present in modern, ghost-written autobiographies of the great and the near-great, may be momentarily unnerved by its absence as they start to read this book, but I have an idea that they will miss it hardly at all, once they have accepted the fact that what they are reading is straight from the General's mouth. Too much polish would have made this a less important book, just as too much polish would have made Arnold a less important man.

Arnold was a desk-pounding bellower and a catch-as-catch-can fighter. He lacked the dignity of a Marshall and the austerity of a Leahy or a King. While Marshall was Marshall, King was King, and Leahy was Leahy, Arnold was always and inevitably "Hap"—to the members of the Air Forces and to the general public. The ever-changing members of his wartime Air Staff were almost incessantly engaged in following along in Hap's tumultuous prop-wash, smoothing out, toning down, and polishing up the ragged edges of his undiplomatic and unorthodox methods of getting things done. They knew—and still know—that probably nobody but a man like Arnold could have got the things done that he managed to get done in that war. In the same sense, nobody but a man like Arnold could have written this book. His decision to do it himself was—like many of his wartime decisions —both pig-headed and sound.

In these days, with the Navy acting like a boisterous brat and the securely separate Air Force like a patient old gaffer, it is hard to realize that Arnold had to fight like a boisterous brat himself to make the Army and Navy—and people in general—understand that we had to have a real Air Force in order to win the war. He fought so hard and so well on that line that the Air Force, these days, is actually embarrassed over—and is trying to combat—a popular illusion that we don't have to have anything *but* an Air Force. One of the most entertaining things about this book of Arnold's is the transparent manner in which, every now and then, he gets all wound up to hop into his old battles with the Army and the Navy and then seems to realize, suddenly and with a shrug and a grin, that those battles are over as far as the Air Force is concerned.



Arnold fought with no holds barred when he had an adversary, but he is no man to gloat over a victory or to kick an opponent when the opponent is down. Now contentedly retired on his California ranch, his job done and his superlative rank of General of the Air Force a permanent one, his present attitude toward the wars he fought with the other services, and also toward the war he helped fight with the enemies in Europe and Asia, is downright mellow. For the sake of history, if not for the sake of peace between the services, it may be a little too mellow. It is characteristic of the uniqueness of Arnold as an individual that when he no longer needs to be a diplomat he seems to have become one. He looks back on his brash, impertinent, and heroic past as if he were an affable patriarch. It seems to me that he skims too lightly over the real story of the scandalous inter-service wartime bickering and that he veils too heavily some of the facts of the real battles—the battle of the Pacific, for example. He knows—but he only intimates—that because of what the B-29's under LeMay were doing to Japan's industries and air force in the spring and early summer of 1945 there may have been no military necessity for the costly Okinawa campaign or even for our use of the atomic bomb. But, on these matters and on many others, he exercises a restraint which, in its cageyness, is engaging, but which, in most other ways, is disappointing. This book by no means tells the whole story of what Arnold knows about the high-level strategic planning and execution of World War II, but it is obviously all that Arnold chooses to tell. The chances are that the truth would enhance Arnold's place in history. But one is led to suspect that Arnold has no more respect for history, as such, than he has for syntax, as such. He seems content

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to leave history to the historians and syntax to the grammarians.

There is, however, a great deal of history in this book and, if it is not the whole story of the war, it is just about the whole story of Arnold; and that story, in spite of the literary faults inherent in the telling of it, is a fascinating and often delightful one. The book is packed with anecdotes of the sort that Arnold himself was always packed with. They range all the way from plain belly laughs to flashes of brilliant insight into human character and world events. He writes of his early days as a pupil of the Wright Brothers with a genuinely heartwarming nostalgia and with an accuracy that is impressive. He is often sly, as when he quotes an Admiral as having been the one who said, "The average man suffers severely from the pain of a new idea." He tells with wonderful good nature how, for nine long and extremely important months early in the war, he was "in the dog house"—the one attached to the White House—to such an extent that Roosevelt barred him from conferences and threatened to banish him to the Pacific. He was the top airman in the Army, but he had to find out, privately, from his friend General Marshall, what was going on in top-level strategic planning. He had got into the dog house because he had hurt the feelings of Mr. Morgenthau, the Secretary of the Treasury. He emerged from the dog house when the President finally invited him to a small dinner at the White House and asked that he come a little early. "We then talked for quite a while," writes Arnold mildly. "We discussed British aid, aircraft production, the building of an Air Force, conditions in the Pacific, and when I arose from my chair, upon the entry of some higher ranking 'brass,' I realized I was out of the dog house."

Readers unacquainted with some of the controversial aspects of our top-level strategy in World War II will not be bothered by Arnold's tendency to be reticent about the several crises of that war—crises with which he was intimately acquainted and in which he played an historic role. All that Arnold has to say is interesting and much of it is engaging and entertaining. And what he has not said is, at any rate, significant. He was in and out of such a variety of dog houses during his Army-and-Air-Force career that one can understand and sympathize with his evident desire to avoid, in this memoir written in the contented autumn of his hard-hitting life, the kind of uncompromising honesty that made him famous—and out of which most of those dog houses he used to live in were constructed.

"Brass," by Eli Jacobi.

Between Defeats in the Pacific

CORAL SEA, MIDWAY AND SUBMARINE ACTIONS, MAY 1942-AUGUST 1942. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Boston: Little Brown & Co. 307 pp. $6.

By C. Van Woodward

FOR those who came in late, Volume IV will be a fortunate introduction to Captain Morison's fourteen-volume history. It deals with a brief, dramatic segment of the Naval war wedged tightly between two defeats and consisting of nothing but victories. Coral Sea, with which the book opens, followed by one day the surrender of our forces at Corregidor on May 6, 1942, "the low point of the war for American arms." A few hours after the landing on Guadalcanal, the subject of the last chapter, occurred the disastrous Naval defeat at Savo Island, which touched off another time of troubles. Between Corregidor and Savo, two tiny islands of ill omen, stretched exactly three months of happy sailing and smiling waters for the U. S. Navy and its official unofficial historian. Captain Morison rises to his opportunity as superbly as Admiral Spruance rose to his at Midway.

One of the five great Naval air battles of the Pacific war, Coral Sea was the first completely carrier-against-carrier action of Naval history in which ships of neither side sighted surface vessels of the other and all the losses were inflicted by air. The battle is memorable for other reasons. Although a tactical victory for the Japanese, who sank more ships than they lost, it was a strategic victory for the United States. It turned back the tide of Japan's southward expansion, and it proved "an indispensable preliminary" to the victory of Midway a month later. Had the two big enemy carriers disabled at Coral Sea been available in the following action, they might well have altered the course of history.

The Battle of Midway is the climax of this volume and the climax of the Japanese Naval effort. It was Yamamoto's bid for victory, for he knew what few of his countrymen knew, that he would have to knock out the U. S. Pacific Fleet in 1942 or lose the war. American dive bombers from the carriers *Yorktown* and *Enterprise* smashed the admiral's hopes in a few hours by sinking all four of his fleet carriers. This was the first crushing defeat the modern Japanese Navy had suffered. It forced the admirals to cancel ambitious plans for further conquest and threw them into a defensive role from which they never recovered. The seizure of two barren islands in the Western Aleutians as a diversion

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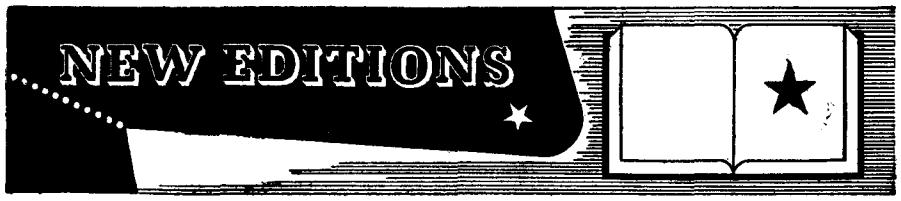
was no consolation. Describing the gloom over the defeated fleet a Japanese officer wrote that the Marines could not even drink their beer. "Could one say more?" asks Morison.

Admirers of one unpublicized American admiral will rejoice in a long merited tribute. "Raymond A. Spruance," writes the historian, "emerged from this battle one of the greatest fighting and thinking admirals in American Naval history."

After giving the admirals and the flyers their due, however, Captain Morison concludes that "Midway was a victory of intelligence." Yet the sum total of what he tells us about Naval intelligence in this battle—admittedly the key to the victory—is that it was "deduced from various bits of information from a variety of sources"! This from such a meticulous historian can mean only one thing. Navy security is still up to its old tricks—four years after the war. The public is still expected to account for certain victories on the assumption that our admirals were mind-readers. On the other hand, the historian freely exposes the disgraceful deficiencies of our torpedoes in 1942 and by no means leaves the impression that all was perfection in the Navy.

Morison is as scrupulously fair to the Army Air Force as to the Japanese. But the propaganda of our late enemy was silenced by gunfire some years ago and draws only a calm recital of facts. The case of the AAF is slightly different. With a few casual ranging shots in his text and one broadside of a footnote he silences one old battery. Recalling the exorbitant claims of the Army airmen after Midway and quoting some of their releases, he sums up their actual contribution as "no hits" and "no damage." The Japanese cruiser sunk in the unprecedented time of fifteen seconds, incidentally, turned out to be the U. S. submarine *Grayling* crash-diving to avoid the twenty half-ton bombs dropped by B-17's.

Of the humanist rather than the traditional military school of historians, Samuel Eliot Morison measures ships and their captains in the long perspective of sea warfare and refuses to let machines and innovations obscure the human nature of history. Even the tables of task-force organization, cumbersome catalogues that are always a bother to writer and reader, are introduced with Homeric overtones. Typically Morisonian are the Yankee colloquialisms and the occasional military slang interjected with a sure hand into a prose that normally moves in the grand manner. This is history that is alive and that will live.



I RETURNED to Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria" with some doubts, wondering whether I would find it as excellent as it had seemed more than twenty-five years ago, but the doubts were unwarranted. It survives triumphantly as a work of art, skilfully composed of facts and circumscribed by truth. Witty without ostentation, probing without cruelty, it makes Victoria's character—with all its absurdities—an object of intense interest, and one from which it is impossible to withhold respect. We cannot help laughing at her ridiculous moments, but we cannot help admiring her dogged virtues, among which the simple power of survival was so largely responsible for her place in history. Strachey has arranged and manipulated the threads and incidents of her career with dexterity and economy: her childhood, her relations with her mother and with Baroness Lehzen, her first years as a maiden queen, her marriage and subsequent development side by side with her adored Albert, her alternating popularity and unpopularity, her dealings with Melbourne and Peel and Palmerston and Gladstone and Disraeli and Salisbury, her withdrawal from public view and favor, her return from widowed seclusion under the guidance of a great impresario who called her the Faery and charmed the wits out of her—and, finally, the unique Jubilee years, when she was hailed as "the mother of her people," when "the greatness of her realm and the adoration of her subjects blazed out together."

She was a far from simple character, with her "vein of iron" and her abounding sentimentality. ("For, though many of her characteristics were most often found among the middle classes, in other respects—in her manners, for instance—Victoria was decidedly aristocratic. And, in one important particular, she was neither aristocratic nor middle-class: her attitude towards herself was simply regal.") But in one thing she was entirely simple—her truthfulness. This was undeviating, irrepressible, and irresistible. "It was her sincerity which gave her at once her impressiveness, her charm, and her absurdity."

What she might have been without Albert we can only guess. Perhaps not very different; perhaps she would have found it necessary to discover, or invent, another Albert. But this biography could well have been entitled "Victoria and Albert," for the study of the Queen is matched by a no less brilliant study of her consort—a figure of constantly increasing stature—who, had he lived, might have been capable of directing England's political development along other lines than those it followed during the late nineteenth century.

"Queen Victoria" is one of eighteen "Harbrace Modern Classics" recently published (Harcourt, Brace, $1.75 each). The volumes in this new series are attractively jacketed, neatly bound, light in the hand, well printed, and reasonably priced. In addition to these merits they offer a wide reader's choice. American fiction is represented by "Babbitt," "Arrowsmith," Katherine Anne Porter's "Flowering Judas and Other Stories," and Kathryn Forbes's "Mama's Bank Account." English fiction is represented by Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" and "To the Lighthouse," and E. M. Forster's "Passage to India." Mr. Forster's "Aspects of the Novel" is an example of urbane, informed criticism by a successful novelist; while Dorothea Brande, in "Becoming a Writer," speaks helpful words to those who would learn how to write. American humor gives us that choice item, "The Education of Hyman Kaplan," by Leonard Q. Ross. Saint-Exupéry's "Wind, Sand, and Stars" and Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "North to the Orient" lift us into the airman's world—the first on the wings of a poet-philosopher-flier. Milton Steinberg fulfills the promise of his title "Basic Judaism." In "Hunger Fighters" Paul de Kruif tells the stories of a dozen scientists who have struggled to increase and preserve the American food supply and improve the American diet. In the biographical field there is not only Strachey but also Papini with his popular, spirited "Life of Christ" and "The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens," in abridged form. Louis Untermeyer's "The Book of Living Verse" (revised) contains almost 600 pages of selections from more than fifty major, and some minor, poets—from the old ballad writers down to Spender. This is an interesting list with something for almost every reader.

—Ben Ray Redman.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Even Good News Is News

DID you know that the following happened in the past two weeks?

▸ Paul Robeson "freedom rallies" were staged in two cities—Washington, D. C., and Chicago—and went off without incident. Citizens of both cities showed a profound respect for the right even of totalitarian propagandizers to speak or sing, and demonstrated the effectiveness of their own right not to listen or to be provoked. In marked contrast to the Peekskill episode, veterans' groups in both cities defended Robeson's right to his platform and urged their fellow citizens not to be goaded into foolish or undemocratic action, which would actually play into the hands of the very forces they opposed. It was pointed out that the easiest way to promote totalitarianism in this country would be to combat it by imitation.

▸ A Congressional group looking into the expenditure of American funds in Europe came back with praise for the way in which our money was being spent.

▸ Russia returned nine destroyer escorts sent to her during the war under American lend-lease, bringing the total of warships returned by the Soviet Union up to twenty-seven. First reports are that the ships are in good condition.

▸ Construction was started in September on more than 100,000 new homes—a record for the month—giving definite promise that the housing shortage might be licked before very long. Good labor-management relations was given as one of the important reasons for the spectacular increase.

▸ In Scarsdale, N. Y., a group of prominent citizens acted jointly to protect their community against the rising tide of censorship and political discrimination. Eighty-one citizens, among them Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric Company; Allan Sproul, president of the Federal Reserve Board of New York, and Harry E. Humphreys, Jr., president of the United States Rubber Company, opposed any attempts to "ban books from the public schools because of the political leanings of the authors." They prepared a statement declaring that "the purpose of education in a free society is to develop intelligent citizens, loyal to their country and to the pursuit of truth, believing in the endless possibilities for the betterment of mankind. A system of censorship . . . smacks of the methods used by Communist and Fascist states and defeats the very purpose of the Bill of Rights, as well as the purpose of education." They conceded readily that free access to reading materials by young people involved some risk, but that "there are greater risks in any alternative proposal."

* * *

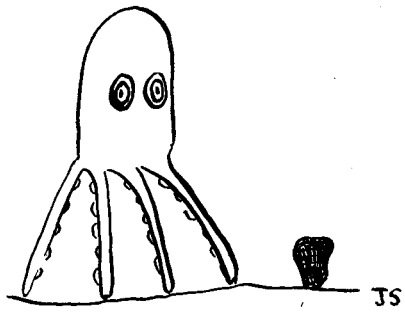
Not all these items appeared in the nation's press. Some of them rated no more than an inch or so of space in the back pages of our largest dailies. Some of them were run as "filler" items—those short news takes designed primarily as an aid to printers working against close lock-up schedules rather than for any inherent editorial value. Our purpose in listing these items, however, is not to blame the press for ignoring or underplaying certain happenings. It is at least an open question whether press or public is primarily at fault. For what matters is not whether newspapers publish what they think their readers will believe is newsworthy, or whether the public has to take what it gets. What matters is that both press and public need to take time out for a good, long, hard look at the theory and practice of news selection and news treatment.

If news is not really news unless it is bad news, then it may be difficult to claim we are an informed people. Calamity as the principal yardstick for news coverage may have its charms as circulation-getters, but it hardly affords a balanced view of the world at a time when critical decisions are called for. These decisions should be made only after *all* the facts—and not merely *some* of the facts—are carefully weighed and appraised.

We are not arguing here for converting newspaper editors into pollyannas, or for equipping all copy-desk readers with rose-tinted eyeshades. Accent on sweetness would be no advance over accent on disaster. What we do argue for is recognition that good news is every bit as essential for an understanding of our times as is the bad. We complain a great deal about distortion of American life in *Pravda*, but the systematic though unintentional distortion we do to ourselves is scarcely better. We keep diligently posted on every murder, every altercation, every element of tension or stress; we owe it to ourselves to put the picture into focus with at least some coverage of the happenings that do something for human dignity and decency.

This can't be sloughed off with the caricature that you can't expect a newspaper to publish an extra every time a man kisses his wife. We're not talking here about running headlines on the commonplace; we're talking about the kind of news item listed at the beginning of this editorial. If a community such as Scarsdale does something positive about book banning at a time when the country is

Atomic Age Fables



XXII: The Oyster and The Octopus

THE octopus is a nomad on the bottom of the ocean. Its gloomy eyes, and its ravenous tentacles are always after prey.

"You are the most monstrous creature of the sea," said an oyster to an octopus.

"And you are its greatest fraud," the octopus answered.

"I miss your meaning!" exclaimed the oyster.

"One would suppose," replied the octopus, "that you create the pearl and are beautiful. Instead, you are a stone and a scavenger, and your pearl is a disease." —J. S.

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having a bad case of censorship jitters, that's news. If the housing shortage is on its way to being licked, that's news. If the citizens of two communities show they know how to carry the responsibilities of a democracy, as they did in Washington and Chicago with respect to the Robeson rallies, that's news. If Congressmen, instead of cutting away and carping at Government expenditures, say a kind word about American aid, that's news.

So far as foreign affairs are concerned, there comes to mind a news story that broke late last summer in connection with the air lift into Berlin. Large headlines proclaimed the ominous fact that American planes were being fired upon in the corridor. The story quoted American fliers as saying that Soviet anti-aircraft gunners had been coming pretty close with flak. Three days later, a one-inch item appeared in two of the New York newspapers to the effect that American Army officials in Berlin had investigated the reports and were able to determine that they were erroneous. In the meanwhile, however, a wave of indignation had spread across the country and the cold war had become warmer. The issues and tensions between the United States and Russia are serious enough, and the prospects for peace gloomy enough, without the super-irritants and hot needles of inaccurate and inflammable news. But we are willing to concede that the error which led to that particular news break was an honest one. We do not concede, however, that all that was called for to set the matter straight was a one-inch filler presenting a skeleton correction.

Again, the issue is not whether the newspapers are to blame or whether the readers are to blame. We are all to blame. What is called for at this point is not fault-finding or recrimination, but an honest and titanic effort to adjust our sights. The American people today are hungry for something constructive and affirmative, something that can call attention to positive values. The newspaper that will recognize this, the newspaper that is not afraid to reflect a rounded view of American life, the newspaper that gives some sense of the heroic mold of the average man and his desire to contribute to the general welfare, is the newspaper that will win readers in far greater numbers than any new comic strip or murder serial. So far as *SRL* is concerned, we hope to be able to make a small beginning by publishing with some regularity a box in which would be listed good news worth the telling and the knowing.

—N. C.

Bookmarks

BOOKS were never so short-lived as they are today. Happily, or unhappily, they do not enjoy an exclusive franchise to impermanence. The headlong gallop to oblivion is a free-for-all. Exemplars of every category of self-expression (or of self-suppression) are eligible. So are personal reputations, good or bad, and therein, at least, lies some comfort. What was Dillinger's first name?

* * *

Angela Thirkell's reestablishment of Trollope's Barsetshire accents the ease with which British authors invent county names to suit their purposes. H. C. Bailey and Agatha Christie have created Barfordshire, Colstershire, and Loamshire—we've forgotten which evolved which. Have American authors ever employed this device—introduced, for instance, a governor of Vermont when they really didn't want to say Vermont? Some pleasant possibilities are open: Massanecticut, Indinois, Minneconsin, Arizornia, Idahana, Arkansippi, Tentucky, Florigon.

* * *

Add locutions which the world should willingly let die: "At this time." What's the matter with "now"?

* * *

A good example of word-dating is supplied in Henry James's "The Portrait of a Lady" (1881):

> His father, as he had often said to himself, was the more motherly; his mother, on the other hand, was paternal, and even, according to the slang of the day, gubernatorial.

Mr. Mencken notes that Richard Grant White's "Words and their Uses" (1870) blacklisted "gubernatorial."

* * *

What word did people use in order to describe a counterclockwise motion before there were clocks, or counterclocks?

* * *

We were brought up rather sharply on reading this in "City Limit," by Hollis Summers:

> Her anger grew like the pilot light on a gas stove. It spread through her, lighting the burners of her body.

If they had cooked with gas in John Donne's day, how he would have

loved that! For our part, we were reminded of a wise saying of Dr. Johnson's, buried somewhere in "The Lives of the Poets," which we quote from memory with all attendant risks: "A metaphor taken from art degrades nature; a metaphor taken from nature ennobles art."

* * *

Portrait of an unruffleable man: When Emerson's Concord home was ravaged by fire in 1872, Louisa May Alcott stood guard over the "scorched, wet pile" of books in the yard. Emerson walked up. "I see my library under a new aspect," he remarked. "Could you tell me where my good neighbors have flung my boots?"

* * *

Promptress, *n.* A woman who is on time.

* * *

In "Look Homeward, Angel" Thomas Wolfe made the fairly common error of referring to 1900 as "that year which marked the beginning of the twentieth century." This proves that he did well to go in for writing novels instead of teaching mathematics.

* * *

Does anything happen advertently? Is there ever a toward incident?

* * *

A correspondent informs us that we were only half right, or less, when we noted recently in this space: "It's Lloyd's, not Lloyds' or Lloyds." It *is* Lloyd's if the reference is to the association of underwriters (the people who will insure you against triplets or an uprising in Tristan da Cunha), but it's Lloyds if the reference is to the bankers. At that, the two organizations must have to do a lot of mail-swapping.

—J. T. W.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Works of Willa Cather

SIR: Mr. Norman Holmes Pearson's review of "Willa Cather on Writing" [*SRL* Oct. 8] was read with pleasure at her publisher's offices. His last sentences, however, were read with surprise. Hasn't anyone tried to buy any of Miss Cather's books lately? He would find them very easy to obtain, since Alfred A. Knopf has kept not only "A Lost Lady" and the "Professor's House," but all the works by Miss Cather that the house has published in print. We feel that this is an even more "splendid tribute" than reissuing them at this date would have been.

WILLIAM COLE,
Publicity Director,
Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

New York, N. Y.

List of "Wicked Esthetes" Wanted

SIR: In "Poetry's New Priesthood" [*SRL* June 18] Mr. Hillyer associates what he calls the "new estheticism" with "intellectual neo-Fascism." Furthermore, the writers tainted with this "new estheticism" have, in his words, "pooled their separate timidities and frustrations"; and their "sterile pedantry" is "based on a sense of personal inadequacy." The Bollingen Award Committee, he suggests, was infected with this estheticism, and he goes on to state categorically that "half the committee" were "sympathetic to a group which has a genuine power complex."

These charges are serious; they go beyond matters of intellectual disagreement; they have to do with moral character and personal motive. The writers attacked are, it is charged, frustrated men with power complexes, men lacking moral courage and integrity, men who are impelled by Fascist motives.

Mr. Hillyer ought to list the names of these vicious persons. His responsibility to the public demands it: in order to protect itself, the public needs to know definitely who these men are. An effective Paul Revere cannot afford to be mealy-mouthed. Moreover, in this case, vagueness serves not only to screen the wicked esthetes but to compromise those possibly innocent writers who have blundered into the "subsidized quarterlies" through misapprehension. If the list is produced and published, such innocent persons will be freed from suspicion. Surely the process of proving "guilt by association" must be quite as repugnant to Mr. Hillyer as it is to most right thinking Americans. By all means, let us have the names.

CLEANTH BROOKS.

New Haven, Conn.

"The Mature Mind"

SIR: No doubt Dr. Wertham is right about most of the books he lumps together in his article on "The Air-Conditioned Conscience" [*SRL* Oct. 1]. I wouldn't know, because I have not read them. However, his inclusion of Overstreet's "The Mature Mind" on the list seems to indicate that he himself has not read that one. It is the only one I ever wanted to read (on the strength of an *SRL* review, by the bye) and I was not disappointed. Certainly in its insistence upon individual and social maturity it can hardly be called escapist. In fact, if one checks down Dr. Wertham's devastating list of doctrines taught by the psycho-uplift books—vest-pocket Machiavellianism, Panglossian optimism, social irresponsibility, egocentric hypochondriasis—he will find Overstreet consistently on the other side.

W. N. FRANCIS.

Lancaster, Penn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We agree that "The Mature Mind" should not be considered on the same level as the "self-help" books. Dr. Wertham was characterizing a trend when he mentioned Mr. Overstreet's recent book, and he specifically said that to lump together on the same level all the titles he mentioned "may be unfair to some individual book."*

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"If you'd take those rocks out of your mouth, Demosthenes, maybe I could understand what you're talking about."

Hiroshima "Moral Adoptions"

SIR: We are happy to enclose our check to care for a Hiroshima orphan for one year. . . . Since we are spinsters I don't suppose we would be allowed to have a child over here, but if we could have him, or her, we would accept the responsibility and do our best to rear him happily. . . .

ETTA GIBSON.
MYRTLE MOORE.

Menlo Park, Calif.

SIR: . . . Just think how wonderful it would be if every subscriber to *SRL* "morally adopted" one child. . . . I do not think there would be any better way to wipe away any vestigial bitterness than by doing something to help those innocent children orphaned by the bombing.

JULIUS SELIGSON.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: . . . I have very little money, as I am a veteran and a student, but my conscience will not let me rest. I could never legally adopt the child, but perhaps I can be of some help in this way.

BARBARA STONECIPHER.

Ann Arbor, Mich.

SIR: . . . I am sorry, but I feel I can provide for only one. . . .

ROBERT MADIGAN.

Veterans Administration Hospital,
Minneapolis, Minn.

SIR: . . . Like all "mothers," I should prefer a child who is bright enough to take advantage of whatever opportunities life may offer him. If he happens to be musical, that would be an added attraction for me. However, it is the need of the child himself that is of greatest importance; so I will leave the details of selection to the judgment of those familiar with these needs.

GRACE B. MESERVE.

Providence, R. I.

SIR: As partial recompense for the immoral act of dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima I would like to be included as sponsor for a moral adoption. . . .

STEPHEN R. BEST.

Cambridge, Mass.

SIR: . . . While I believe in sending missionaries to Japan, it is certainly

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just as important that we act the part of Christians and a Christian nation, as to go to Japan and talk about Christianity. . . . We are therefore enclosing a check as down payment on a moral adoption. The amount is not great, but it would be fine if several hundred would join in this "peace effort," which might help to redeem our souls. Some day it will be our turn to look for help.

DR. & MRS. DAVID H. JOHNSON.

Tacoma, Wash.

"The Elite Among Us"

SIR: In *SRL* of Oct. 8 the LETTERS section contains two separate comments on Irwin Edman's "The Elite Among Us" [*SRL* Sept. 10]. In Mr. Edman's defense, both comments reveal that the writers missed his message completely, using it only as a springboard for expressing their own convictions.

Mr. Edman says many things "between the lines." His article is a groping toward something rather than an affirmation of anything. It is the reflection of an intellectual trying to make his peace with democracy—not always an easy task, heaven knows! Therefore, it is to Mr. Edman's credit that he upholds democracy and only speculates, rather wistfully, upon its improvement and survival.

It is a sad commentary on the present stage of development of our democratic society that he can be so completely misunderstood—as it turns out, the comments you reprint tend to demonstrate his point.

Mr. Edman may be a groping intellectual but he is not a "misguided" one. We would do well to question and grope for higher standards along with him.

ALBERTA KELLEY.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: I was amazed to find in your magazine in the short space of six weeks a precise analysis and an even more succinct solution of the American intellectual dilemma. Ever since my arrival in the States over two years ago I have been troubled by the apparent paradox of the uncultivated and barely literate American college graduate, who is supposed to receive a broad liberal arts education, and the European university student, who is being given a purely professional training and is yet very much aware of past and current trends in music, art, and the drama. Why does the European college student stand out in a crowd and his American counterpart become easily absorbed in its mediocre standards?

Mr. Fadiman in "The Decline of Attention" [*SRL* Aug. 6] has provided us with a clear exposition of the forces in our mechanistic culture which inhibit the possibility for lucid thinking and the continuous drive for ready made formulae which will halt the process of thought altogether.

The solution which Mr. Edman offers us in "The Elite Among Us" [*SRL* Sept. 10] has great appeal to me as an Englishman. I am not prepared to equate democracy with mediocrity, and if we are to preserve our cultural values only by creating an intellectual elite class, then by all means let us

"The most exciting literary importation from England since the war."
—HAYDEN CARRUTH, *Chicago Sun-Times**

The Last Enchantments

A NOVEL

by ROBERT LIDDELL

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"An enchanting story . . . a strange and gentle book . . . Its touch is light, but the brush of its prose leaves a burn."
—THOMAS SUGRUE, *N. Y. Herald Tribune Book Review*

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—ALICE S. MORRIS, *N. Y. Times Book Review*

"He is witty, wise and humane . . . a novel of humor, sadness and occasional biting satire."
—WILLIAM MCFEE, *N. Y. Sun*

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not hesitate. For if we in our desire to preserve the democratic ideals interpret them too literally, we will run the risk of losing most of our most precious values and finding ourselves holding an empty shell which will hardly be worth fighting for.

J. SCHONFELD.

New York, N. Y.

Rebukes from Irwin Edman

SIR: Mr. Warren H. Carroll [LETTERS, *SRL* Oct. 8] says he read my essay "The Elite Among Us" [*SRL* Sept. 10] "with a mixture of sadness and anger." I read his letter with a similar mixture of emotions. My sadness is due to the suspicion that either Mr. Carroll does not know how to read or I do not know how to write! Both alternatives are depressing.

It is particularly ironic to be accused of being in the camp of T. S. Eliot. What prompted my essay in the first place was my exasperation with T. S. Eliot's plea for an imposition of the elite given in his recent "Towards a Definition of Culture." Just a few months ago I wrote an attack on the notion of an hereditary or social elite as given by T. S. Eliot, when I reviewed his book for *The New York Times*. As a consequence, I was attacked in print as a philistine. Now Mr. Carroll accuses me of being antidemocrat. Life, to paraphrase a radio program, can be difficult. Mr. Carroll will perhaps forgive me for trying to spell out for him and for others who may have been similarly misled about what I was trying to say. The whole point and burden of my article was that there is no essential contradiction between democracy and distinction. I deliberately noted the failures and mediocrities of democracy, to avoid being accused of having a sentimental version of it. I ended up—I *thought*—by trying to suggest that democracy could generate standards of excellence and examples of it, generate, in other words, its own constantly renewed elite. I was trying to suggest that the common man had uncommon capacities for distinction. What on earth is undemocratic about *that*?

While I am complaining about being misunderstood, may I also file a demurrer against Mr. Sheldon Karlan [LETTERS, *SRL* Oct. 8], the grounds of whose praise makes me somewhat uneasy. "We are," says Mr. Karlan, "a nation of heathens, of men who have lost all belief." If Mr. Karlan means that lack of belief in the supernatural is "the core of this crisis in the world," I am afraid we are in different camps. There is perhaps a lack of faith in human possibility and a lack of generosity and hope. But if he means our trouble lies in a lack of what he calls "Christian sentiment"—based on theology, I am *not* in his camp either.

Writing is supposed to be an art of communication. I have apparently failed to communicate. Perhaps part of the difficulty lies in the fact that *The Saturday Review* blithely changed my title from "Democracy and Distinction" to "The Elite Among Us." Once years ago "The Admirable Crichton," by Barrie, appeared in the movies under the title "Male and Female."

IRWIN EDMAN.

New York, N. Y.

The Film Forum

MODERN ART

***The Saturday Review*'s Weekly Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Bertha Landers, guest reviewer for this week's* FILM FORUM, *is the new head of Audio-Visual Services for the Peoria (Ill.) Public Library. Formerly she directed the film department of the Dallas Public Library, which she started seven years ago. Her particular interest in art is evidenced by her studies at the Art Students League in New York and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. She has had several one-man shows, including an exhibition of prints in the National Gallery. In addition, she is represented in the forthcoming book "American Prize Prints of the 20th Century," by Albert Reese.*

WHAT IS MODERN ART?

Produced by William Riethof. Distributed by The Princeton Film Center, Princeton, N. J. (20 min., color).

"Isn't it beautiful!" . . . "You can have it!" . . . "That's a masterpiece!" . . . "That's a laugh—it's abnormal!" . . . "Crazy, that's what it is, crazy!" All these comments are familiar as more or less average views on modern art. This film, photographed in beautiful color at the Museum of Modern Art, in New York City, starts its discussion with this interesting interplay of comments.

In the film a photographer and a painter speak out in words of one syllable and express their own ideas about modern art and its many "isms." The role of the photographer is played by Neva Patterson, an attractive young actress, and the modern painter is Vladimir Sokoloff, veteran stage and screen actor. Both play their parts extraordinarily well. Their own facial expressions and genuine interest in the subject guide the audience to understand the seriousness of modern art. A fascinating galaxy of famous modern paintings becomes the focal point for their discussion.

The film opens with one of Picasso's most controversial paintings, "Girl with Peacock." Here is a portrait in which the face is seen simultaneously from different viewpoints, giving more than the usual complement of eyes and other features. The artist points out that the painting is not supposed to be a portrait in the traditional sense, but is a visual image of the spirit of a girl. "Some pictures are not supposed to delight you, but to haunt you," he tells the perplexed photographer.

The film points out that the concept of the artist divorced from reality, isolated in his ivory tower, belongs to a century that is past. Today's painters are of a different type. Such painters as Stuart Davis and Peter Blume are pointed out as leaders among those who have become involved with the images of a more and more complex life, feeling the pulse of the age and reflecting its problems. The photographer says that she can understand this kind of painting. But abstract and other difficult painters like Miró, Klee, Chagall, and Dali bother her. The painter explains that these artists are painters of the subconscious mind, using all the poetic, haunting reminiscences of unearthly fantasy and dreams.

Some people may disagree with the comments on Picasso's famous black-and-white mural "Battle of Guernica," but few will deny his sympathetic expression of the horror of the Spanish War. Some may say that the distortion in the picture borders on caricature. That is a matter of opinion. All that the film attempts to show is that artists are forever inquisitive, and they use their creative powers to investigate, dissect, and analyze the things they feel as well as the things they see.

The American public today, as always, is avidly interested in the new and the different. Fashion designers are well aware of this, witness the constant change of styles each season. These styles, too, are sometimes beyond our understanding. This same lack of understanding of the modern painter has caused the layman to hesitate in expressing himself for fear of being called stupid, and has forced the artist to withdraw into seclusion. The public is willing to accept new ideas in the scientific world, in fact it expects new ideas to be developed. Surely the creative arts are as much influenced by our times as science and invention. Painters are merely trying to create an art in harmony with the spirit of the times, in tune with the modern way of life.

This film is a concrete step in the right direction to bring understanding about the art of our time, which should prove a pleasure to both artist and public. It is an important film. As the artist in the film says, art has one enemy—ignorance. But if we may look forward to more films to follow this splendid example, we shall be advancing toward the goal of better understanding and appreciation of our modern art. "In every age art is a new language—worth the trouble of learning."

—BERTHA LANDERS.

For information about the purchase or rental of any films, please write to Film Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

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FICTION

(Continued from page 18)

some of the more convincing scenes are those that deal with the maneuvers and elbowing-on-the-turns by which financial interests are able to gain control of the Kessler-Edge company. The Depression plus the advent of sound brought a need for refinancing that reduced most of the original studios' founders to high-paid employees subserivient to Eastern boards of directors. The inevitable tug-of-war between the new business interests and the veteran movie-men is well handled until, near the end, Mr. Robbins fudges on us.

About to get the heave-ho from the conniving majority stockholders of his own company, Johnny Edge turns to his old carnival pal, Al Santos, who has become a kind of—as well as a kind—Gianinni who banks a large part of the movie game. While we never have received anything but humane treatment at the hands of our bankers, we cannot help but feel that what Mr. Robbins began as an epic novel of the film industry collapses into bathos when this banker-fairy-godfather is put back into the game in the last minute of play to restore Johnny Edge to power with a flourish of his magic cigar.

As the son of a film pioneer, this reviewer has had to call upon his reserve supply of objectivity in appraising a plot that allows the Eastern investors to gain the upper hand over Kessler and Edge through the mutton-headed gullibility of old man Kessler's wastrel son who falls hook-line-and-sinker (his disastrous two-million-dollar flop) for Edge's ex-wife, an irresistible, nymphomaniacal, vengeful movie star who lures him into ruining the company. If the foregoing sentence is a lot to swallow, so is Mr. Robbins's climax.

At its best, though, in its earlier sections and when dealing with those aspects of Johnny Edge's career that ring particularly true, this is a readable period novel of an all-too-little-known phase of Americana.

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Basement of a Soul

THE DARKNESS BELOW. By Frederic Morton. New York: Crown Publishers. 248 *pp.* $3.

By Nelson Algren

FREDERIC MORTON'S first novel, "The Hound," was a profound report of a psychological conflict within a man trapped between the future and the past: one whose ultimate triumph it was to gain life, however briefly, by repudiating, within himself, a dead world's heritage.

"The Darkness Below" is also a record of psychological conflict: that of a refugee physician torn between two professions, two women, and two selves.

Anatole Braham's troubles begin when he starts working nights in the basement of Wist's Bakery. He is cramming for an American medical degree and needs the job to support his wife and daughter until he is licensed to open a New York office.

But the basement begins, slowly, to take on a meaning and to fill an old need. The outrageous, backbreaking, all-night drudgery, the very fury of his labors wakens a sleeper in the basement of his soul—some primitive there whom neither his mother nor his wife had ever quite succeeded in taming. Nightly the cellar rouses this darker self with the challenge of getting through one more night. Nightly Anatole meets that challenge. Until his fear of the dark and the dirt turns to troubled affection, and affection begins taking on the proportions of an obsession.

> He made friends with the scarred old benches, which had known the growing and the kneading of a thousand doughs. The brutal simplicity of the cellar was in accord with the nature of its harvest; the dough . . . came to life when called upon to live; it died when duty was duty; it left behind the manna of fulfilled remains.

Anatole had always seemed to be what his women had wished him to seem—but the basement was his own, where lived his truest self, and he could not give it up for either the sake of his conventional self or for the ambitions of those dear to him.

> From the heat or cold of his own body, from his own perspiration, he calculates how the dough will fare in tonight's weather: how much yeast it will need to grow, how much warmth in the proofbox to thrive. . .

For who had now become dearest was the dark-haired tart of the pastry-counter, the baggage named Elvira who slept with the cakebaker. Anatole should have felt nothing for her. Yet there it was. And he forces her into confessing that she shares his feeling.

We feel that our Viennese Hamlet is getting over his head. That something has to give.

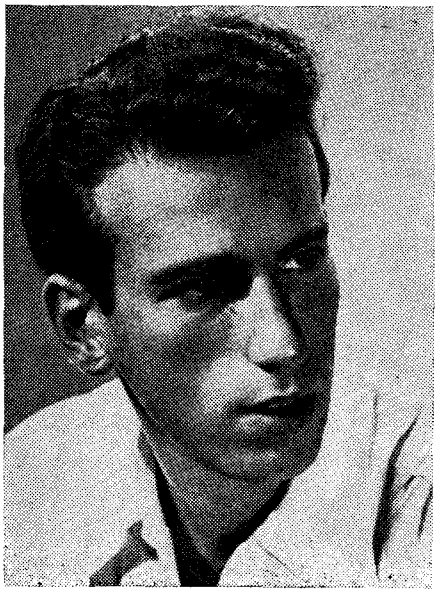
Something gives all right. In a drunken brawl between Anatole and the cakebaker. But the solution is telegraphed pages ahead and its presentation is overwrought, leaving us, as the final darkness closes over Anatole, without sense of loss. For we cannot be moved by the death of one in whom we have not sensed the breath of life.

When Mr. Morton's first hero, Lothar Zahn, went to his death, a part of the reader died with him. But here he has put more life into Anatole's onion rolls than into Anatole:

> The rich, sour smell of leaven in full ferment, the star-rilled Wiener rolls blooming along the lard-greased bench: rows dipped in the dull silver of poppy alternate with others capped with the caraway's bright brown. The Big Rye bloats and broods in the fermenting trough.

To this reader's knowledge no one has written of the baking of bread more knowingly or more tenderly. Yet though he has actually forged a mystery of the spirit out of frozen eggs and pumpernickel, one is left at last feeling that this time the yeast failed to ferment.

Nelson Algren is author of "Never Come Morning" and the recent "The Man with the Golden Arm."



—*Glidden.*

Frederic Morton—"a mystery of the spirit out of frozen eggs and pumpernickel."

Vt. to Ky., 1783-88

MORNING TIME. By Charles O'Neill. New York: Simon & Schuster. 392 *pp.* $3.50.

By Edmund Fuller

THE drama of history forming the background for Mr. O'Neill's first novel is the struggle of the American colonies, after the shock of victory over the mother country, to determine whether they would drift to inevitable disintegration under the loose Articles of Confederation or whether they would bind themselves into a permanent union through the much challenged and suspected document drawn up by the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. A span of some five years, from 1783 to 1788, is involved in the telling of this story, and its movement ranges from Vermont through Pennsylvania and Virginia to Kentucky.

Little time is spent with the persons of high place in those deliberations and draftings. Instead, Mr. O'Neill gives us a sweeping picture of how the issue seemed to the men just out of the battle: those who had not received the pay and lands which they had been promised; those who, in bitterness, joined such protest risings as Shay's rebellion; those cynical ones who believed the state alliances would dissolve rapidly and were merely intent upon getting what they could for themselves out of the confusion; and those honest, hard-working, plain people intent upon carving out a sound and decent way of life in the rich lands of Kentucky and the other frontiers. Many of these latter wanted a unified nation, and many of them sincerely feared that the proposed Constitution might be a trap, leading to monarchist tyrannies as bad as the one they had sloughed off.

All this story we see through the fortunes of plainspoken, foursquare Theron Hawley, a Connecticut youth just mustered out of the Continental Army. He starts for the Wyoming territory of the Western Susquehanna, where he has a brother and some family land holdings. This is territory bitterly disputed by Pennsylvania and Connecticut and in a backwash of that dispute Theron loses his brother and what interest and hope he had had for the prospects of Union. Bent upon shaping his own life, the personal "Republic of Theron Hawley," he goes to Kentucky. Behind him he leaves the beauteous Virginia belle Althea Knowles. Ahead of him is the beauteous Irish colleen Nora Quaid, an indentured servant.

One of the cryptic and fascinating

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figures of American history, General James Wilkinson, seeks to involve Theron in his vast and subtle conspiracy to sell out the whole Kentucky region to Spain, with dreams of an Empire to span all the unopened lands to the Pacific. When Theron, at peril, has discovered Wilkinson's treachery he tries to expose him only to find that Wilkinson's web of protective deceit covers even Washington's door. The only thing that can stop him, if even that, would be the ratification of the Constitution with the stronger government that would ensue. So, on the eve of the vital Virginia Ratification Convention, Theron, in a last deadly battle with the terrible Dowd brothers, agents of Wilkinson, makes it possible for the Constitution of the United States of America to come into existence. After that, happily, he is united with Nora, which is certainly no more than he deserves.

The book appears to be well documented with respect to its important historical aspects. Because of this it has a claim to be rated as an historical romance with a plus value. It could have gone farther than this, and I hope Mr. O'Neill's next one will. He has the marks of a sincere research man. He has all the standard skills of the storyteller to a high degree. But he has confined himself, for all this adroitness, to a standard yarn. The gap is wide between the interest in his materials and the dreary predictability of his dime-a-dozen love-story patterns. Theron's adventures would be a good deal more absorbing if he had handled this side of the matter with more substance and originality.

Apple Harvest

By Lawrence P. Spingarn

AN APPLE was the fruit that took Eve down to earth. There, for the lack
Of Eden's bower, Adam shook
Firm gates that would not let him back.
Now Jonathans and Northern Spies
(Round tempters peering through the fence)
Themselves give hope of Paradise
But glow with ruddy penitence.
Grass chokes each tree. No pickers take
The windfalls from this fallow ground
For cider or a harvest cake.
Their dropping makes an empty sound,
And worms carve mansions in their sweet
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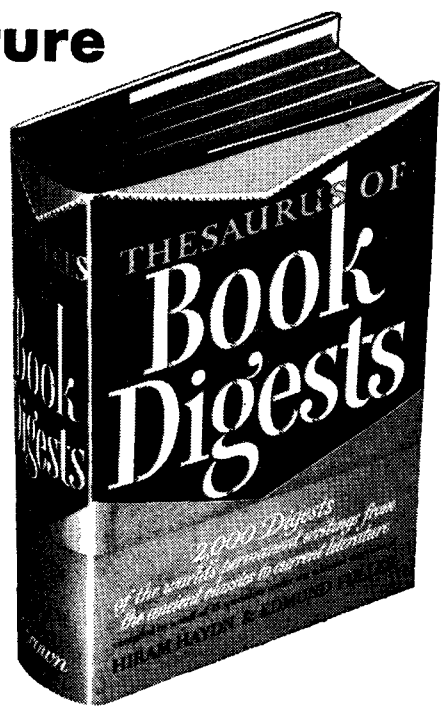

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Seeing Things

WHAT YOU WILL?

"WHY this is the best of fooling, when all is done," squeaks Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Some of us nowadays, confronted with "Twelfth Night,"* find we cannot agree with him. The comedy has its beguiling features. No one can deny the loveliness of its language. But when it interrupts its song to indulge in clowning, when its plot demands rational following, and when we sense the full cruelty of many of its jests, especially those aimed at madness, we are forced to wonder whether we have not grown too old for the play or it too old for us.

Norris Houghton once defined the theatre as being a time of life. Debatable or not as such a definition may be, "Twelfth Night" seems beyond dispute to belong to youth. There must be countless young people who can sit before it today enraptured by its horse play, unbothered by the silliness of its storytelling, and willing to believe that for laughter's sweet sake a girl could really pass herself off as a boy.

I know in my youth I used to love "Twelfth Night" and never tired of seeing Julia Marlowe and E. H. Sothern in it. I liked it well enough nineteen years ago when Jane Cowl and Leon Quartermaine appeared in it. I was able to forgive it its foolishness, even as one must put up with the faults of a valued friend, when in 1940 Helen Hayes and Maurice Evans were its Viola and Malvolio. But over the years, having seen it more times than I either can or care to remember, I must admit my disaffection for it has grown, displacing to a large extent what was once my fondness.

I can still read the play with pleasure. That pleasure is then easily come by, for who can resist the melody of Orsino's "If music be the food of love"; the sheer loveliness of such a song as Feste's "What is love? 'Tis not hereafter, Present mirth hath present laughter," etc.; or the beauty of Viola's "Make me a willow cabin at your gate and call upon my soul within the house; Write loyal cantons of contemned love And sing them loud even in the dead of night; Halloa your name to the reverberate hills And make the babbling gossip of the air Cry out 'Olivia!' "

The expected, the treasured verbal magic of Shakespeare is upon the text's every page. In beguiling line after beguiling line the native woodnotes are warbled wild by Fancy's child. In the reading it is the images which delight, the lark-song quality of the mood which enchants, and the poetry, and it alone, which matters.

The plot counts for little. The music, unreleased but self-releasing, drowns it out, enabling one to forget, hence forgive it. The reader's imagination is liberated by the verse and rises to meet it unimpeded. The eyes do not question Viola's success in passing herself off as Cesario. Feste's sour wheezes can be skipped without waiting for the laughter they so plainly invite and so pitifully fail to win. There are no pauses, as behind the footlights there must be, for the teeterings and the totterings, the tumblings and the candle-wavings, and all the inevitable, would-be comic monkeyshines in which the loutish characters have no choice except to indulge. Since it remains physically disembodied, the play's spirit is protected. It is spared the ordeal of taking mortal form. By being thus denied what is tangible in the flesh, it is rescued from the hazard of intruding into a world of reality not only alien but hostile to it because it is subject to literal judgments.

There is little wrong and almost everything right about the production of "Twelfth Night" which Roger Stevens has brought to New York from Ann Arbor, where it was a highlight of last May's Drama Festival. Valentine Windt's direction is sprightly, swift-moving, and charming in touch and quality. Louis Kennel's simple backgrounds of steps and curtains can claim modesty among their other virtues. They allow a poet, who in his verses is the best of scenic artists, to set his stage verbally. The cast, though starless in the ordinary, top-heavy sense, includes its capable performers, most of whom achieve a welcome luster and vitality in their playing. They all speak well; move well, too; and approach even the most tired portions of the text as freshly

—*Pix, Inc.*

Florence Reid and Nina Foch—"little wrong and almost everything right."

**TWELFTH NIGHT, by William Shakespeare. Directed by Valentine Windt. Setting and costumes by Louis Kennel. Management of Michael Myerberg. Presented by Roger Stevens. With a cast including Arnold Moss, Frances Reid, Nina Foch, Carl Benton Reid, Philip Tonge, Henry Brandon, Harry Townes, Ruth Enders, etc. At the Empire Theatre, New York, N. Y. Opened October 3, 1949.*

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as if neither they nor anyone else had ever been exposed to them before.

Frances Reid, for example, is an ingratiating Viola. Although lacking the full-throated voice which would grant her lovelier speeches their final melody, and sometimes unmindful of the laughter latent in the double-meanings of her scenes with Olivia and Orsino, she is none the less gay and captivating. Nina Foch is truly the beautiful Oliva the script demands. Arnold Moss, a fine actor, has the needed style, pomposity, and authority as Malvolio, even though his steward does not supplant memories of the more sharply drawn characterizations by Sothern and Evans. Carl Benton Reid and Philip Tonge struggle bravely with the thankless task of keeping those dreary knights, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, laughable. And Harry Townes as Feste succeeds in doing what is almost the impossible. He creates a Shakespearean clown who for once does not make modern audiences feel like crying (if I may borrow a line of Sir Toby's), "O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye!" His Feste has the everlasting pathos of all people condemned to being professional funny men. Mr. Townes sings his exquisite songs beautifully with a small but true voice. His eyes sparkle with an intelligence and wit which sugarcoat the bitter pills of humor he must ask innocent bystanders to swallow. Indeed, he could not be better, and no one I remember seeing act the jester has been half so good.

Even so, I must confess that at present I find "Twelfth Night," no matter how well done, hard to take when I encounter it behind the footlights. "If this were played upon a stage now," says Fabian, "I could condemn it as an improbable fiction." It is precisely as such a fiction that it bothers and bores me when I see it acted. I find disbelief rather than pleasure in its central story of a girl masquerading as a boy. The sudden pairing-off of lovers at the end seems to me the ultimate in silliness. I cannot suppress my yawns when Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria, and Fabian indulge in their antics. I cringe before the cruelties heaped upon Malvolio.

Thousands, fortunately, still delight in seeing the comedy, but I no longer am one of them. I would feel more relief than grief were I to be told that I would never have to see it again. Mind you, I say "see it again." When it comes to rereading it, that for me, as I have said, is quite a different matter. In the freedom of the library "Twelfth Night" becomes quite a different play. There its magic is still potent and its beauties are all-conquering. —JOHN MASON BROWN.

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Music. *This month marks the hundredth anniversary of Chopin's death, and the occasion has prompted publication of several new books about the Polish composer. Two of these are by eminent men of letters. A Polish poet well known to his countrymen, Casimir Wierzynski, has written a new biography of Chopin ("The Life and Death of Chopin," reviewed below) which puts special emphasis on the composer's youth in Poland. It is fitting that the other literary figure to write on Chopin should come from France, since this was the composer's second home. André Gide in his "Notes on Chopin" explains how the music affects him and how he feels it should be interpreted. . . . In "Living Music of the Americas" Lazare Saminsky has written of the contemporary musical scene in a manner sure to provoke controversy.*

Re-evaluating a Major Polish Composer

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CHOPIN. By Casimir Wierzynski. New York: Simon & Schuster. 444 *pp.* $3.95.

By Doda Conrad

ONLY since Poland's resurrection thirty years ago has the world been consciously aware of the fact that Chopin was a Pole. From the musical standpoint, too, Chopin's true position, his importance as one of the cornerstones in the evolution of music, was not confirmed, or actually discovered, until the early Twenties, when a thorough re-evaluation of nineteenth-century influences took place.

Certainly the name Chopin is French, and the composer's father did come from Lorraine, but who better than Americans will understand that this would not prevent Chopin from being, Polish-born, a true Pole. On the other hand, political interests favored, in spite of the alleged traditional *Gründlichkeit* of German musicologists, the keeping-up of the misunderstanding. It was essential, before World War I, to mislead, in order to minimize the achievements and the success of a Pole. As far as Chopin's importance as a musician is concerned, however, the fact that his greatness has been recognized late is not due to a political maneuver. This has been one of those developments of critical judgment so common in the history of the arts. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that it is in German-minded music circles today that there is more shoulder-shrugging at the mention of the weight of Chopin's influence and position, while it is now clear that this very influence has overshadowed many German names of importance in Chopin's time and later.

The publication of Casimir Wierzynski's "The Life and Death of Chopin" was timed to coincide with the tributes offered to the great Polish musician on the hundredth anniversary of his death. I am convinced the appearance of this book will mark, in English-speaking countries at least, a turning point in the public's judgment and appreciation of Chopin's stature as a human being and therefore as musician. It has been said, and the pianist Artur Rubinstein in his introduction to Wierzynski's book confirms this opinion, that understanding and hence interpretation of Chopin's music is a natural endowment of Polish pianists. Similarly, the true understanding of Chopin's humanity, of the normal reactions of a psychology nourished in Polish national traits can be achieved only by a Pole, someone entirely and profoundly familiar with Poland, with Polish traditions, family life, the Polish lack of emotional inhibitions, and the simple exteriorization of their feelings, last but not least Polish Old-World manners and courtesy.

Casimir Wierzynski is a poet, one of Poland's greatest. His present position, his life in exile, and the similarity between the circumstances that have brought him to the United States and the circumstances that brought the great Polish poets to France during the nineteenth century seemed to fit him, miraculously we must admit, at an interval of 100 years into the circle of Chopin's friends.

Casimir Wierzynski is also a musicologist. This will come as a revelation to everyone, since this biography is his first attempt in the field of music. He now stands as one of Poland's great musicologists in addition to being one of its foremost poets: his first attempt is a masterwork.

—Bettmann Archive.

Frederic Chopin — "he never inspires either pity or tears."

I confess that I feared Wierzynski's book might represent what is commonly thought of as a "poet's approach" to a subject that requires scientific objectivity. The scarecrow of a romanticized piece of fictional biography à la André Maurois or his imitator Emil Ludwig haunted me. In fact, the book has achieved results that make it outstanding and in many ways without precedent. It is not at all the expected work of a poet, but it emerges as a poet's purest and most genuine achievement. This seems to prove once and for all that poets are probably the only people who understand the word objectivity in its real meaning.

"The Life and Death of Chopin" is a monumental piece of documentation. I marvel when I think of the plain physical effort it must have taken to collect, some 4,000 miles away from the theatre of Chopinesque operations and with present communication difficulties with Poland, these innumerable items, facts, dates, incidents, and details. They could only have been available among personal and family archives and recollections. The first half of the "Life," the Polish period, which receives unprecedented emphasis, never once betrays library-source gathering.

The poet's approach to this mountain of material consisted in screening, from a profoundly human and comprehensive angle, the documents on hand, to sift and to discard all that was superfluous. Such a quantity of colorful original material (I am thinking of the descriptions of the Polish ways of life), so many interesting and unknown elements lay there that it must have taken Wier-

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zynski all his poetical insight to make facts sound true and truth sound real, Paul Valéry tells us: "The value of a masterwork is measured by the quality of its refuse." Wierzynski's great experience as a writer has given him the courage to discard much precious material which might have distorted and overburdened the new personality of Chopin he wished to reveal, and he has created a biography of fascinating realism.

The book in itself is packed with elements new from a musicological point of view. Naturally of primary interest is the sensitive manner in which the recently discovered correspondence of Chopin with Countess Delphine Potocka (pronounced Pototska, Chopin calls her "Findelka"!) has been woven into the biography. These letters, including Chopin's wholly unexpected and vitriolic comments on musicians of his time (I am thinking particularly of the frankness with which he criticizes Franz Liszt), cast a strange new light on his personality.

How far we are from the *éternel moribond* legend! Wierzynski gives us an impression that will soon erase the very memory of the Hofmannesque and ghostlike emaciated consumptive playing in dimmed light to a gathering of swooning society. The Chopin who appears in Wierzynski's book is by no means a man whose life was entirely happy, but he never inspires either pity or tears. After all, a man who was able to realize his own personality so fully, who never hesitated about the goal he wanted to reach, could not have been an unhappy man. Chopin died at the age of thirty-nine, Mozart at thirty-six, Schubert at thirty-one; I have always refused to consider their lives tragic or even sad. A romantic century eager to lean toward tragedy and to create legends *au goût du jour* has misled us for too long, and the greater thanks are due Casimir Wierzynski.

The translation as a whole is adequate (barring lacks of sensitiveness such as the indiscriminate and pretentious use of the term "Madame," for instance). For someone who can, as I do, retranslate mentally into the original language, the enjoyment is even greater, and I imagine the actual Polish text must be an enchantment from a purely stylistic point of view.

Doda Conrad, basso, was born in Poland and educated in France. He is now a U. S. citizen, having first come to this country in 1926. *Mr. Conrad has made a specialty of singing the songs of Chopin.*

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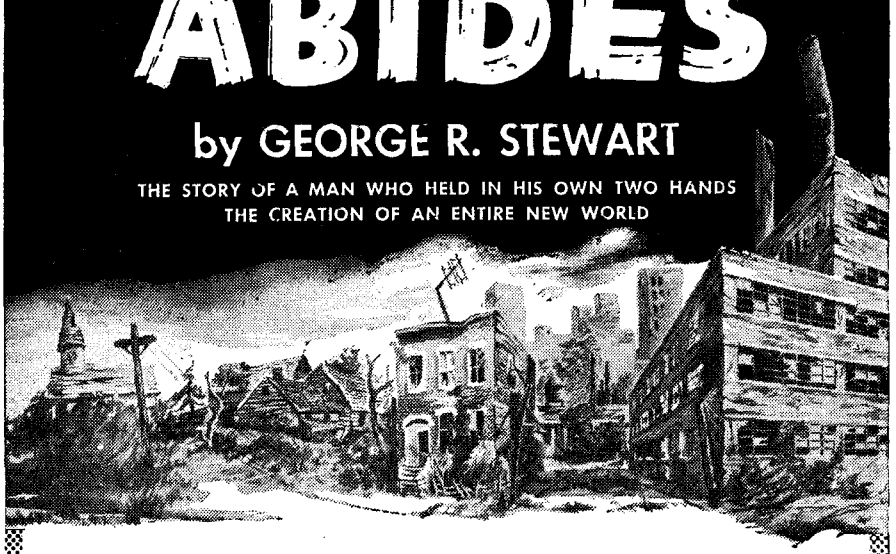

➡ He stood on the rim of a new era in world history. Behind him yawned the chasm of a disaster that had destroyed almost every one on earth. Before him was the future, to be shaped as he pleased. Here was the world, as in a small boy's dream, with the candy stores all open and the policemen all gone.

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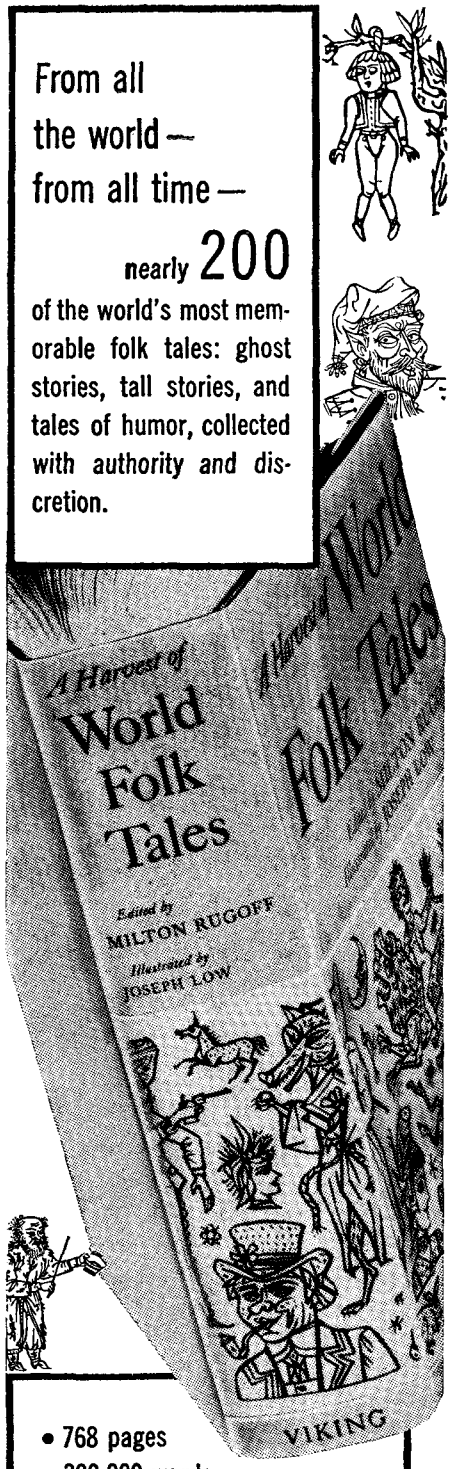

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Gide & Other Views

NOTES ON CHOPIN. By André Gide. New York: Philosophical Library. 126 pp. $3.75.

FREDERIC CHOPIN: 1810-1849. *Edited by Stephen P. Mizwa. New York: The Macmillan Co. 108 pp. $3.*

By Gerald Abraham

LET me confess that books on music by distinguished men of letters and centennial volumes of collected essays are not my favorite reading. I cannot say, therefore, that I was disappointed by these two books; indeed they both gave me some pleasurable surprises. But most of the pleasant surprises came from the book which Dr. Mizwa has edited for the Kosciuszko Foundation. In the original French no doubt Gide gives the reader a literary pleasure compensating, perhaps more than compensating, for the lack of substance in his criticism; but he reaches us here through the filter of a translation which frequently deprives his style not only of charm but of sense. What, for instance, is one to make of the statement that "there is a certain relationship between the third and the fifth which is found from one octave to the next, giving by inversion the sixth, the whole forming the perfect chord"?

As a man of letters Gide is highly professional; as a musician he is a typical, if unusually sensitive, amateur. He has been playing and loving Chopin for the greater part of his life —he contemplated the publication of some "Notes on Chopin" as long ago as 1892—and it is most interesting to the student of Gide to have this autobiographical record of his musical experiences. (The "Notes on Chopin" proper take up less than forty small pages of large type, the rest of the book consisting of "Fragments from the 'Journal'" bearing on music, mostly but not exclusively on Chopin, and some hitherto unpublished miscellanea including a letter to Gide from Edouard Ganche.) But the Chopin lover will not get very much more from these notes than he would from the jottings of any other intelligent amateur. Gide's comments on specific technical points in the music —I suspect he was rather proud of them—give evidence of a proper musical education but have no great value in themselves, and when he turns to the generalities one expects from the man of letters writing about music he produces just the sort of thing one does expect:

> How simple are Chopin's musical propositions! Nothing comparable here to what any other musician had done before him; the latter (I exclude Bach, however) start with an emotion, like a poet who then seeks words to express it. In the manner of Valéry, who, quite the contrary, starts with the word, with the verse, Chopin, like a perfect artist, starts with notes (this, too, is what made people say that he "improvised"); but, more than Valéry, he at once allows a quite human emotion to invade this very simple situation, which he enlarges so that it becomes magnificent.

I see what he means but what he means seems to me completely without foundation; it is an arbitrary fancy like his antitheses between Chopin and Schumann ("Schumann is a poet. Chopin is an *artist*, which is quite different"), and his paradoxical claim that what we most admire in such German composers as Mozart, Gluck, Handel, Bach, and Beethoven is the quality wherein their music is most aloof from the genius of their race.

Sometimes Gide's remarks are more happily inspired:

> We are told that when he was at the piano Chopin always looked as if he were improvising; that is, he seemed to be constantly seeking, inventing, discovering his thought little by little. This kind of charming hesitation, of surprise and delight, ceases to be possible if the work is presented to us, no longer in a state of successive formation, but as an already perfect, precise, and objective whole. . . . The performer should be cautious about giving the impression of knowing in advance what he is going to say, or that all of it is already written down; I like the musical phrase which gradually shapes beneath his fingers to seem to be emerging from him, to seem to astonish even him. . . .

That is a sensitive pointer to the right way of playing Chopin—avoidance of technical over-slickness, "unbearable assurance"—but a very dangerous pointer if one followed it too literally.

The centennial volume issued under the auspices of the Kosciuszko Foundation contains among other things a biographical sketch by the editor, a chapter (also by the editor) on "Chopin's Indebtedness to the Artistic Tradition of Music in Poland" which hardly fulfils the promise of its title, but does give some idea of the history of Polish music before Chopin, a brief essay on "Chopin the Song-Writer," by Doda Conrad, a speech delivered by Paderewski in 1910, a good proportion of unfamiliar and interesting illustrations, as well as a few that one has seen too many times already, and some new "works of art" which I trust I shall never see again. It also contains the most complete list of Chopin's compositions known to me, compiled by Bronislaw Sydow,

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secretary of the Research Commission of the Chopin Institute in Warsaw. But the chief value of the book lies in the generous selection of hitherto unpublished passages from Chopin's letters to Delfina Potocka. The letters as a whole, the editor tells us, show beyond doubt that Chopin did have a love affair with Countess Potocka—a long disputed matter. But the excerpts translated here are all concerned with music and musicians, and very sensible they are. Most people have read, or at least read about, Schumann's excited praise of Chopin; now at last we know (presuming, as we must, that these letters are genuine) what Chopin himself thought of that praise:

> What he writes is fiddle-faddle, idle talk and nonsense, but no critique. I am always afraid that with the best of intentions he will write something which will ridicule me for eternity. I should prefer his silence, but it is I who must be silent, thankful, and give the impression of being satisfied. . . . After reading his critiques, I feel nauseated as though I had eaten a pot of honey. . . . Pray for me sincerely, my Life, my Dearest, that he may once leave me in peace.

What would Chopin have said of André Gide?

Bi-Continental Survey

LIVING MUSIC OF THE AMERICAS. By Lazare Saminsky. New York: Howell, Soskin and Crown Publishers. 284 *pp.* $3.

By Cecil Smith

WHATEVER other services it may render, Mr. Saminsky's omnibus provides lovers of mixed and obscure metaphors with a source book whose contents will keep them occupied for many a merry hour. On the fourth page appears the sub-heading "Heritage Dipped in Eccentricity," a provocative image that leads to a discussion of "the synthetic modernity of our time, the task of confecting present-day clichés out of alloys of polyharmony, neo-Bachian contrapuntal runs, twelve-tone utilities, and the new rhythm coming from city-brewed dance forms."

Mr. Saminsky's whole survey of contemporary American music (both continents) is, I am afraid, something of a confection of city-brewed alloys and utilities. He is swayed by the conviction that our music requires "a wider basis of appraisal which involves not only the esthetic criterion

(Continued on page 56)

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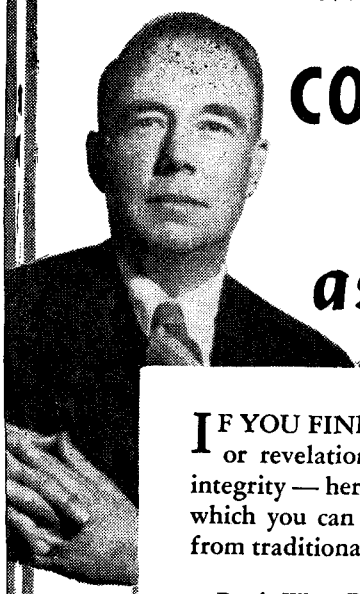

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BRIGHT LITTLE ISLE

CAPRI.

THE boat from civilization to Capri takes about an hour and a half, and you can get on board in Naples or Sorrento. It's a sleek white ship, and music screeches from the loudspeaker every time she puts into port. We started smoothly enough on the morning I boarded her, and a steward in immaculate whites walked briskly around the decks hawking ham sandwiches. The bread was round and doughy, and fatty ends of ham hung untrimmed over the edges, but there were many takers. Ten minutes out of Sorrento and suddenly the ship was bobbing like a Hallowe'en apple. The Capri crowd grew quiet, and some turned green. The steward, with what I suspect was studied unconcern, made one more round with the fatty ham sandwiches. The casualty rate was terrific, and he withdrew. Immediately he was back with a bottle of brandy and a dozen shot glasses. "Cognac for sea sickness!" he shouted smiling indulgently. There were many takers again, and to many he must have appeared as a savior. But a number of suspicious passengers on board who managed to ride out the sea will always have a vision of a crafty Capri steward feverishly checking the weather reports early in the morning before ordering supplies from the commissary. We can see him now. "Rough weather," he is saying rubbing his hands, "cut the ham good and fat, and lay in another case of Martell."

To Capri's square take a funicular . . .

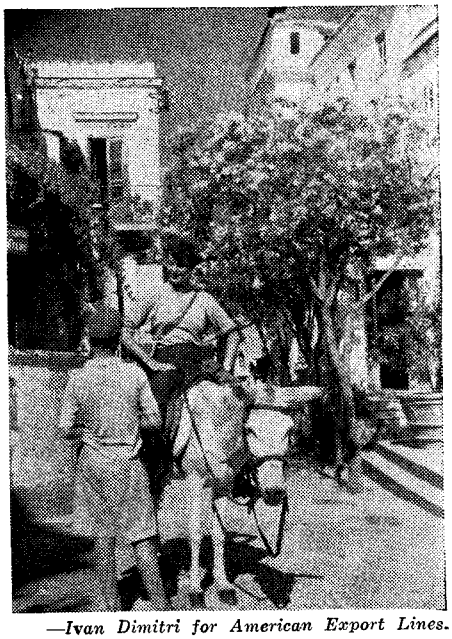
Every visitor to Capri is welcomed to the island by twenty uniformed hustlers, each of whom represents a local hotel. As the boat pulls in they line up in an orderly formation on the dock. When the passengers debark each solicitor, like a soldier counting off, recites the name of the establishment he represents. They say, "Quisisana," "Cesare Augusto," "Morgano Tiberio," "Eden Paradiso," "Internazionale," until finally their voices are lost to other hucksters who are selling boat trips to the Blue Grotto, carriage rides up the hill, and raw sea urchins to be eaten with a squirt of lemon.

They tell stories on Capri of German tourists who came before the war and rented villas while their wives were buying post cards, and of Americans who caught the Capri fever and sold their factories by cable. Tiberius settled on Capri when he was sixty-eight, and from a castle high on a clifftop he ran the Roman Empire. The ruins still remain and you can visit them aboard one of the four donkeys that are kept in town for that purpose. One of them is named Tiberius, (the others being Michelangelo, Rafael, and Ulysses). The American Army Air Force took over Capri lock, stock, and barrel in this war, and used the whole island as a rest camp. So many GI's married Caprian girls the Army finally requisitioned the Ciano villa, and used it as an official honeymoon retreat.

The heart of the island is the square of Capri village. You reach it by taking the funicular from the harbor up the side of the cliff. Tables of the sidewalk cafés almost cover the whole piazza. While an old tile clock in the tower clanks out the quarter-hours the tourists loll in the chairs of the cafés, and the boatmen and the porters sit on a flight of stone steps. One is bound to run across such Capri characters as Hans Julius Spiegel, who is deaf, dumb, and bizarre. He is usually dressed in a red stocking cap with matching tassel and blue trousers. He wears silver bracelets and broad silver rings. Over his shoulder he carries two oversized woven Sardinian bags. He smokes a hooked Bavarian pipe, and underneath his blue sweater he carries a tiny skull. He can say, "How do you do," and "Auf Wiedersehn," in a high falsetto voice, but if he likes you he will uncover the skull, press it into your hand, and bless you with a hocus-pocus sign. Then there is the Princess Pignatelli, who wears only black clothes, paints her nails with silver-black polish, and has black window curtains in her villa on the Piccolo Marina. If you want to know the weather tomorrow you ask Salvatore Panza, a retired fisherman who still wears a blue cap and a walrus mustache, and maintains a respected reputation for meteorological accuracy.

CAPRI works on inhibitions like strong drink, particularly when it comes to dress. Everyone succumbs, at least, to Capri sandals doubtlessly because they are brightly colored, eminently chic, beautifully made, and cost $1.50. Raffia shoes with crepe soles are about $2. City shoes and evening slippers for women in original, fanciful designs are hand-made by cobblers who often work in the street. They sell at $10 to $20 a pair. Hand-made embroidered silk blouses are about $5, a price which, authoritative feminine sources inform me, would be quadruple in New York. The collection of smart stoles, shawls, skirts, rainwear, and sportswear must be the most concentrated grouping of original Continental design east of the Rue de la Paix. As you probably gather, I think Capri is one of the pleasantest of places in which to leave your lire.

Of Capri's hotels the Quisisana, probably because it has sheltered



—Ivan Dimitri for American Export Lines.

. . . to Tiberius's ruins, a donkey named Tiberius.

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everyone from Bergman and Rosselini this summer, to the United States Army's headquarters during the war, is probably the best known. It is in the village of Capri, five minutes by sandal-shod foot from the square. During the height of the summer a room and bath with all meals costs about $8, about a dollar less at other times during the year. The most beautiful hotel on the isle is the Caesar Augustus, which opened this spring. It is perched on the edge of the cliff 900 feet from the sea in the village of Anacapri. It has a terrace on the sea for lunch, lights in the trees at night, a bar with pastel purple stools, natural paneled wood, and indirect lighting. For couples who want to be alone there is a chalet built on a promontory hanging out over the sea. It has one bedroom, living room and bath, faces water on three sides, and can be reached by a mountain stairway. Room, bath, and full pension at the Caesar Augustus starts at 4,500 lire (675 to the dollar) during the summer, 4,000 lire any other time of the year. The Eden Paradiso, also in Anacapri, has a dining terrace overlooking its gardens of lemon, orange, tangerine, and persimmon trees. All rooms face south, and most any winter day you can sit on your brightly tiled balcony and bask in the sun and the warm winds out of Africa. Life in *paradiso* costs 3,000-4,000 lire a day, food included.

It is altogether possible, of course, to live in Capri on the European plan. The restaurants are good. There is, for example, the Pizzeria Gemma, where everyone sits around an old-fashioned oven and watches the chef bake pizzas, custards, apples, and in season, chestnuts. The Gatto Bianco serves wonderful *crepes al formaggio*, which, as you can probably determine, are cheese pancakes. Then there is the Hosteria degli Amici run by one Ermanno F. de Saint Rémy, an Italian despite the camouflage, who came out of the army and opened Capri's plushiest restaurant. It used to be an ancient coffee shop for baggage porters, but Signor Saint Rémy, a man of considérable Continental charm, who happens also to be the U. P.'s Capri correspondent, white-washed the walls, installed a live grape arbor for a ceiling, and hired a piano player who plays the "South Pacific" score. The formula is successful.

Even if you only visit the island on a one-day excursion you can take in the Blue Grotto, which is really one of the more exciting of the world's highly touted tourist traps. From the harbor you can board a motorboat or hire your own rowboat

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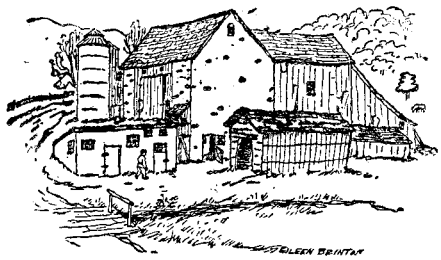
for the half-hour trip down the coast. The grotto is a cave opening off the sea, and to see it at its best you should make the trip about noon. Since the opening is small you can only enter during calm weather, and if you've come in a motor launch you have to transfer to a smaller boat. In any event you pay an entrance fee to a floating gatekeeper, then lie flat in the boat while the boatman engineers you inside. Since the grotto walls don't extend to the sea floor the reflection of the sky turns the waters inside to an intense aquamarine.

If you'd rather have terra firma under foot there are land trips up to Anacapri to see the Villa San Michele, which was made famous by Axel Munthe in "The Story of San Michele." Since Munthe's recent death the house has become a museum of the relics he collected. There is an



ancient Roman skull which had a gold coin in its teeth when found, a Byzantine mosaic table which was being used as a washboard by some Sicilian women, and an Egyptian sphinx which Dr. Munthe had brought to Capri. It sits on a terrace of his villa now, looking out to sea. They say if you touch the rear end of the sphinx with your left hand and make a silent wish it will come true. Just a lot of talk, probably.

—HORACE SUTTON.

Two Poems

By Louise Townsend Nicholl

Square Root

THAT was the place most clearly recollected
For light phenomenal because reflected,
The visitation by a square of sun. . . .
Now sudden vision of the phrase reflects
Greater expansion than the eye expects,
And square has more dimensions than the one.
The sun itself's a square, a second power,
Which, in reduction, enters on the hour.

The room was to the north, window and door.
But after noon had sunlight on the floor
Struck back from dazzled glass
Bewildered and besieged, which nonetheless
Suffered the impact as of bursted fruit,
Reducing multiplicity to root,
Sending from broken quantity too bright
The quiet light.

Mutation

THE day grows hot, the locusts shrill,
The night grows cool, the treetoads and the owl,
Earth's every vowel without lull
Spiraling in the summer's scroll.

That was the weather you and I, apart,
Were held together strangely in its heart,
A latter world where each alone renewed
The deepening treasure of his solitude.

That was the summer: see how all its sound
Is now condensed to silence, all its flow
Shaped into solids crystal and profound
Which to a poem's symmetry must go,
The curious constellations of the snow.

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THE BOOK BUSINESS

(Continued from page 11)

and surplus of the companies. In 1948 inventories were over 100 per cent of the total capital and surplus. In 1947 inventories were turning over at the rate of about one and one-fourth times a year. But in 1948 the turnover was barely once a year.

This accumulation of slower moving stocks suggests that within the last two years publishers have been piling up large stocks of books that they may not be able to sell—at least at anything approaching cost. Unless business improves materially, they are going to have to write off some of these stocks. If that should prove to be true for as much as 12 per cent of their 1948 inventories, the resulting write-off would wipe out their whole profit for two years. Thus it is possible that in time we shall find that the entire book-publishing industry operated without a cent of profit during the supposedly prosperous years of 1947 and 1948.

The present peril of the publishers is enhanced by the fact that half of their large inventories has been financed by incurring heavier liabilities. Better collection of accounts receivable accounted for 17 per cent of the increased inventories, while *less than one-third* can be attributed to retained profits. Since they are operating with extremely inadequate profits, these mounting inventories are severely straining the operations of the publishing business as a whole. The strain is particularly wearing on that quarter of it whose operations are in red ink and are able to survive only through long accumulated fat, an occasional windfall from a book club, and the indulgence of their creditors or their friends.

WHAT is going to become of American book publishing if present conditions continue? Businesses cannot go on indefinitely hoping for some lucky break. And if there should be a general business depression—what then?

There are many ways in which the publishing industry can help itself, and fortunately it is taking some positive steps in these directions right now. One is the industry-wide cooperation to improve selling methods. That has called for intensive studies of methods to aid the bookseller by displays, teaching him how to use direct mail, selling more effectively, working with him in his local newspaper advertising, generally aiding him to do a more effective selling job to a larger number of people.

New, too, has been the effort to find ways for developing a greater number of readers. Experts reckon that industry aid to build up reading speed and book appreciation—now well under way through the larger universities—will do much to augment the number of book purchasers.

And new, too, has been the trend to more effective advertising by publishers. Criticism has been leveled at scanty budgeting of promotion cost (pretty much based heretofore on much questioned fixed percentages of estimated sales), poor advertising copy, too little use of pre-tested direct mail by the publisher, and a dozen other avenues for improvement. Fortunately, that part of the design for better selling is in the hands of experts in our advertising agencies—many specializing in bookselling. Some of them indicate that much progress may be expected—provided the funds hold out.

Just as important is the experiment

Unemployed

By Alfred Kreymborg

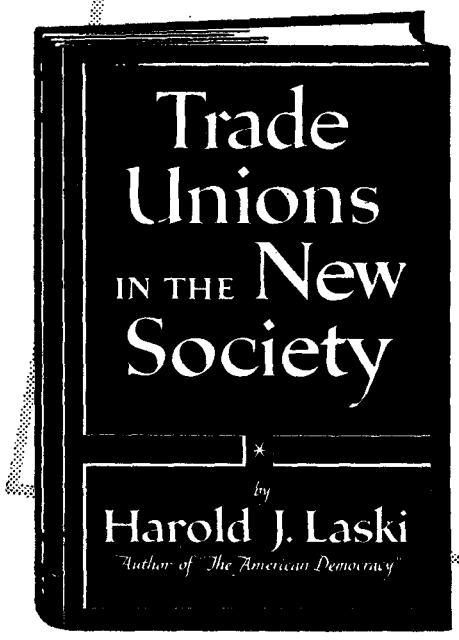
I SAW a man on a crutch
One wouldn't have noticed so much
On a field where the dead and wounded are
Employed for awhile in any war
With which they must keep in touch.

That war was over, over for good—
A fact I thought was understood
By a world at large or the world at home.
Yet here is this lad in civilian clothes
To defy certainty.

Moving alone through mist and cold,
He shivered, shivered, looked around—
A sign no man enjoyed.
Most of us looked the other way
Or thought of other things today.

Watching his gait my gorge arose
Thinking of all he must now go through
Finding a job, holding it too.
December skies were fading fast
As our old park in Washington Square
Seemed to follow the ghostly air
Of a soldier passing the Arch again—
Stark and blue, blue and stark
With human pain, inhuman pain.

Harold J. Laski enters the current American debate over union policy with this timely and provocative volume. He explores the past and present attitudes of society toward unions; examines the impact of mass production, social security, and a planned economy on the workingman; and outlines the role of government in disputes. Of crucial importance to all Americans concerned with democracy's future, is his argument—based on English experience—about the desirability of labor activity in politics. $3.00



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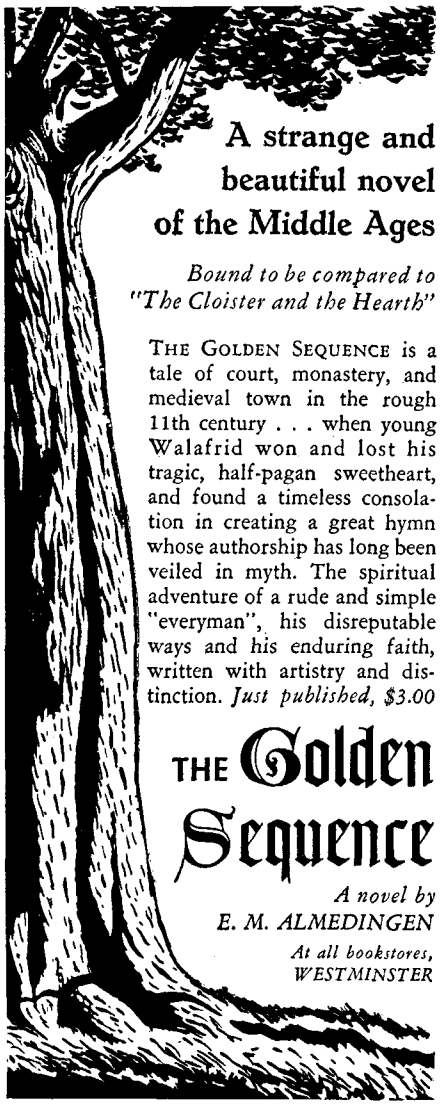
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and research on new processes for manufacturing books. The Book Manufacturers Institute has been active in promoting production economies and new methods.

One of the promising developments now in the experimental stage is the use of some form of photosetting typewriter device to reduce composition costs. This may eventually become a great advantage for small-edition books. But first it must be perfected, and also cheaper processes developed for making offset plates.

Just a few of the many other efforts now being made are these:

New and cheaper materials for preparing electrotypes.

Faster printing presses and new binding equipment which will further reduce expensive hand labor.

Perhaps as important as all of these is the rebirth of a highly competitive era. Manufacturing prices have been gradually coming down for more than a year. That is the obvious result of the research, the speedier equipment, plus more plants being available to handle book work. Prior to 1948 it was often difficult to find printers or binders willing to handle production at any price.

Besides tackling sales and manufacturing problems, much, too, has been done in revising antiquated internal methods. In that my firm figures a good deal. Decent budgeting, cheaper accounting records, cutting out unnecessary paper work, finding cheaper ways to warehouse and ship stock, cutting inside costs for editing and running an office—all these help greatly to insure survival of hard-pressed publishers.

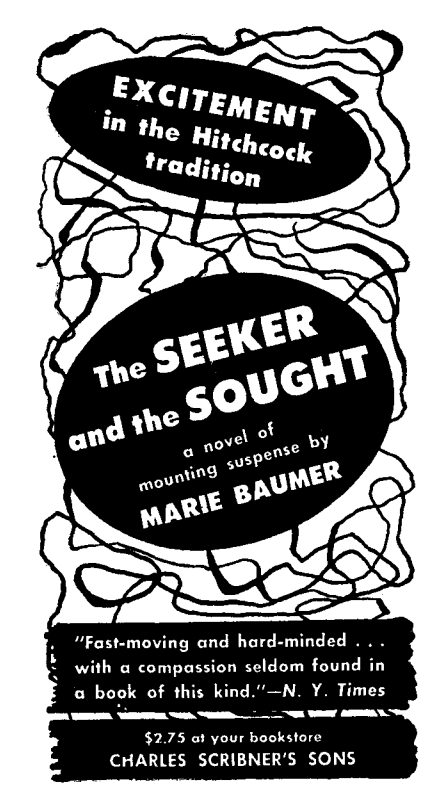
With all of this we still are a long, long way from the certainty of reasonable profits. Maybe it will come one of these days through all these efforts to get new efficiencies and to reorganize.

I met the shoe manufacturer's son on the street the other day. I supposed that after hearing my rather dismal report on the state of publishing he might have become convinced that he should take a job with his father's firm.

"No," he told me firmly, "I still believe the publishing business is the place for me. I'm going right ahead with my plans. Maybe I won't make any money and I know there will be plenty of headaches. But there'll also be a lot of fun."

Frankly I was glad to hear his decision. Some of the one-third who are making money today started up when every expert said their chances for success were almost as bad.

J. K. Lasser, CPA head of the New York public accounting firm of J. K. Lasser & Co., was recently named adjunct professor of taxation at New York University. He is author of "Your Income Tax," "Handbook of Accounting Methods," and other books.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Picnic

By Ruth Langland Holberg

THE chattering, the smoke embodying
Layers of scorched corn and crusted meat,
Stream around the great bulk of granite
Where I alone, lean on a rocky seat.

Strings of wild geese flash the sinking sun
On under-wings, their golden necks stretched out.
They went like enchanted lads. . . . I would be dumb,
Weave coats of thistles for them if I could rout
That faery spell, so they might stand beside
Me on this rock this autumn eveningtide.

The fire grew merry, poppies branched up in a gust.
Before white seedtime, false dandelions blew
All gold, a Midas's garden of desperate flowers
Whose too great beauty is instantly over while new,
While springing from black pits, while curling in frond
And stem to be sucked into the night beyond.

It is colder, the far bright voices are singing.
Leave the rocks, the sky, the loneliness.
Touch hands, touch warm faces, eat food and drink
With them in ancient hallowed ways, bless
With them this year's last supper,—for soon we part,
So soon,—and miles will grow between each heart.

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the Phoenix Nest

GRAVEYARD

HERE lies beneath this shaggy pine
A victim of heady wild-grape wine.
In an old log-house in shameful squalor,
He raised his brood in Troublesome Holler.

Here by him sleeps in sumac clay
His raw-boned woman who died, they say,
While tryin' to cotch the seventh chile,
No granny-woman to he'p the while.

Their oldest one was plumb besot—
This viney sink-hole is his spot.
Stillin' and gunnin' was his downfall—
Too slow on the trigger in a drunken brawl.

Them 'nitials carved with a barlow knife
By a furriner who ruint her soon in life
Brings to mind the dole of poor li'l Mury;
The rascal left in a hell of a hurry.

These purty bits of dishes say
They lowered a young-un here one day—
"Summer complaint" hit's mammy said—
'Tis jest as well she's safely dead.

That stringy flag on a hickory pole
Was raised to honor a daring soul;
He heedless of warnin' took a risky chance
And shot at the Kaiser in Verdun, France.

This myrtle-kivered sunken space
Is the grave of holy, half-wit Grace.
She was no hypocrite or fake,
But she rattled rattlers on a rattlesnake.

—KELSIE RAMEY OSBORNE.

* * *

The Bond Wheelwright Company of 145 East 63rd Street, New York 21, has sent me an unusually beautiful brochure concerning the limited autographed edition of "The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark, or What We Will," by Percy Mackaye, at $100 each. A copy of a letter I wrote to Harrison Smith, president of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, is printed in the folder, along with favorable comments by Brooks Atkinson, Fanny Butcher, etc. "Most of his verse," says Brooks Atkinson, "is astonishingly vivid, full of wild and fiery figures... genuine poetry, full of imagery and figures. By daring to write about Shakespeare's characters on a classical

plane, Mr. Mackaye accepts a considerable challenge. He has a right to accept it because he is a genuine poet in a venerable tradition." I concur, and my own letter shows how deeply I was impressed by an early reading of scenes from the tetralogy. When it was produced with loving attention in Pasadena, the local *Review* called it "a major contribution to American theatre," and Joseph Carter, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, pronounced it "easily one of the most impressive things this man has ever seen in the field."

I have now received the book, and I can report that it is one of the most beautiful examples of bookmaking I have ever seen. The work crowns a lifetime of poetry and poetic drama on the part of Percy Mackaye. To all lovers of Shakespeare the volume will be an enduringly suggestive and enlarging experience; and it has salient significance for our atomic age. The problem of selling such a work of art as is this book, both in its content and its material embodiment, is one that might have given pause to any publisher less courageous than Mr. Wheelwright—not because the effort is not wholly worthy, but because one is always confronted by what Muriel Rukeyser calls in her new "The Life of Poetry," "the fear that rules out poetry."

Certainly, as Miss Rukeyser comments in her defense of poetry, the age is one in which many people see merely confusion, abroad and at home, and their "fear of poetry is against publication of a work written with all imagination." It is for this reason that a daring step like the de luxe publication of a work written with no thought of gain, but because of a long and burning concentration of the author's mind upon the world he knows in the light of its great past, is so laudable. Libraries and institutions of learning should cooperate! No expense has been spared in presenting the work in the most fitting form possible, and I very much doubt whether the publisher will find any great material profit in the venture. He will, however, have almost the satisfaction of the artist himself in knowing that an extraordinary work of poetry has been presented as it deserves. Any lover of the arts who wishes to possess a rarity should be glad to subscribe. All who saw the original production in the Pasadena Playhouse in California last April witnessed what *Theatre Arts* called "a real event in the history of the American theatre." Later there may be a trade edition in smaller format and without the prelude which now gives "the reader an insight into the very process of how this great work came into being." It will be remembered that Percy Mackaye received the 1948 Fellowship Award of the Academy of American Poets. In 1942 he won the Shelley Memorial Award for Poetry.

Speaking of "The Life of Poetry,"

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by Muriel Rukeyser (to be published by A. A. Wyn Co. November 21), it is full of the personality of a modern poet who has learned much from science as well as poetry. It is not like any book on poetry that I have ever read, but it approaches more closely to the individual than a treatise. Here is a living poet talking to you in the language of a poet, not that of a scholar or savant, or even of a teacher; something more rare, a wondering and intelligent being. Not all of it is easy; but it is stimulating and provocative.

* * *

SPELL BINDER

I do not tell you how my life
Is filled with endless doubt and fear,
With daily loss and hourly strife.
Oh, never that! I tell you, dear,
Of how your kindness has no peer,
And how your wit and courage
glisten.
I tell you what you want to hear,
For otherwise you'd never listen!

—Georgie Starbuck Galbraith.

* * *

BAFFLED MALE

Ladies sometimes more queer than
dear,
And sometimes dear in several senses,
What wonder that a man is mere
Grammarian of your moods and
tenses!
The crafty laugh, the unfelt tear
Are both his fault and your defenses
O ladies often dear but queer
And far from clear in your offenses.

—Saul Kane.

* * *

—William Rose Benét.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Thomas Gray. 2. Queen Gertrude, in "Hamlet." 3. The albatross, in "The Ancient Mariner." 4. Shelley's skylark. 5. Helen's beauty, in Poe's "To Helen." 6. "The Poppy," by Francis Thompson. 7. Young love, in "Please to Ring the Bell," by Thomas Hood. 8. The roar of the crowd, in "Casey at the Bat," by E. L. Thayer. 9. Many a lonely hamlet, in "Horatius at the Bridge," by Macauley. 10. "The Wreck of the Hesperus," by Longfellow. 11. Keats, "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer." 12. The "swamping gun" in Edward Bangs's "Yankee Doodle." 13. The Assyrian, in "The Destruction of Sennacherib," by Byron. 14. "The Star," by Jane Yaylor. 15. St. Nick's belly, in "A Visit from Saint Nicholas," by Clement Moore. 16. "John Gilpin," by Cowper. 17. The cloud, in "Hamlet." 18. The snark, in "The Hunting of the Snark," by Lewis Carroll. 19. Baby's cheek, in "Baby," by George MacDonald. 20. The moon, in "The Rubáiyát."

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 814

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

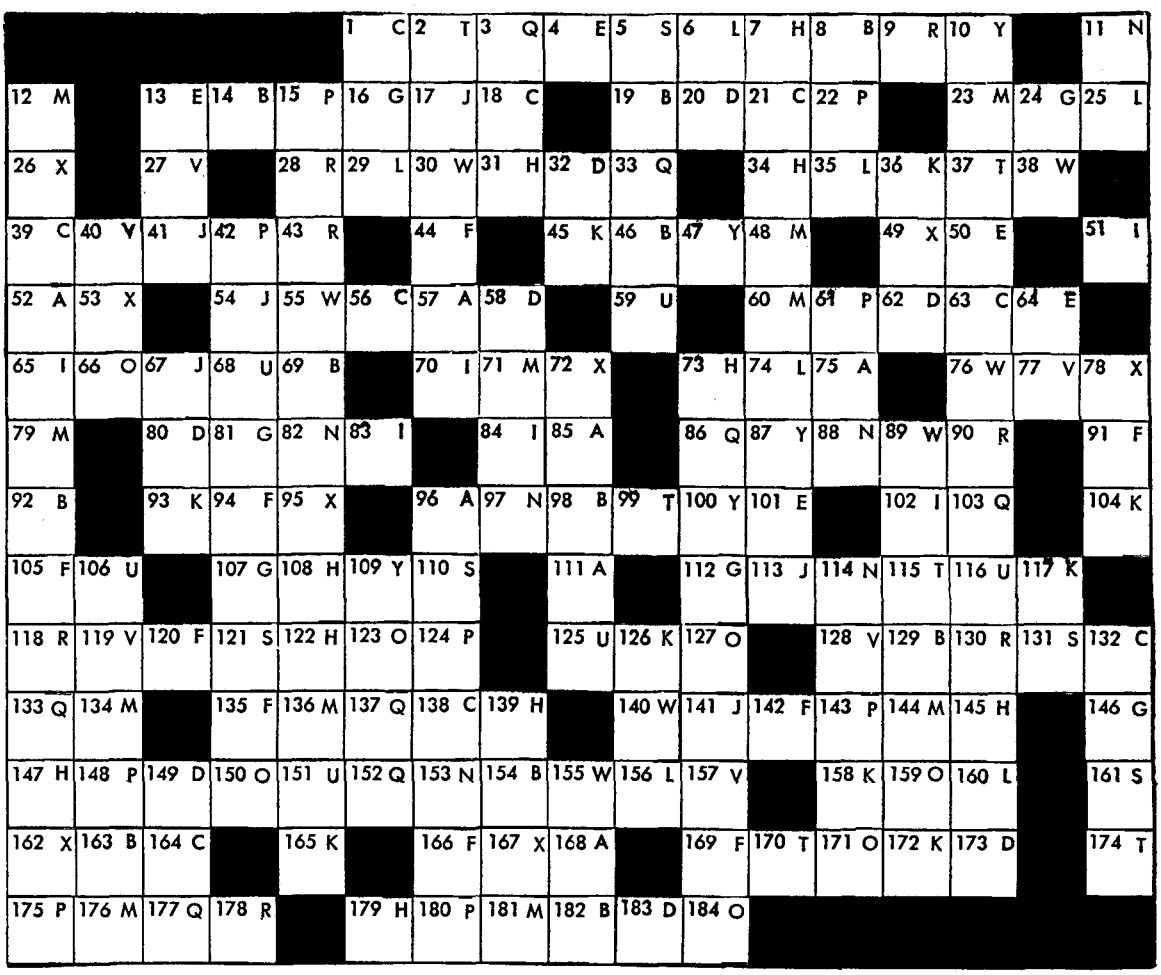
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. First name of the composer of the opera "The Bartered Bride."	96 85 168 75 111 57 52
B. Nickname for Alabama (2 wds.).	19 182 92 69 46 14 8 98 154 129 163
C. Greek Stoic philosopher (60?–120?).	39 21 132 1 18 56 63 138 164
D. A drink of slight alcoholic content, fermented but undistilled (2 wds.).	183 20 62 149 80 32 58 173
E. Italian seaport on a gulf of the Adriatic of diplomatic importance.	50 13 4 101 64
F. Mogul builder of the Taj Mahal in memory of his favorite wife.	142 166 91 105 120 44 94 135 169
G. Went away (with "it"; slang).	24 81 107 146 16 112
H. Courtesy and amiability in response to another's address.	108 145 73 147 179 7 31 34 139 122
I. Second son of Levi and grandfather of Moses and Aaron (Bib.).	83 102 84 65 51 70
J. The person, real or mythical, from whom a race, family, city, etc., is supposed to derive its name.	113 54 67 17 141 41
K. A grub often in the roots of the acacia, chief food of the marsupial mole.	36 165 93 45 126 172 104 158 117
L. Duchess of Gloucester in "Henry VI," Part 2.	160 156 25 29 6 74 35

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. A medieval code of maritime laws named for a town on the island of Gotland, Sweden (3 wds.).	144 176 60 79 12 181 23 71 134 136 48
N. Plundered; sacked.	153 82 97 88 114 11
O. Nickname for the State of Utah.	66 127 123 159 150 171 184
P. Always prepared for action (comp.).	143 15 175 148 61 180 42 124 22
Q. A good, flat, marine food fish.	103 3 137 152 86 33 133 177
R. A thing left over; fragment or the like.	130 90 178 28 118 43 9
S. A kind of leather or felt slipper.	131 161 5 110 121
T. In a general sense, esp. poetic, a Negro or black man.	170 99 174 37 2 115
U. Pertaining to the gums.	68 116 106 125 59 151
V. A dance; a party (U. S. slang).	128 77 27 119 40 157
W. Meantime (Latin).	30 38 76 89 155 55 140
X. The time, also the festival, of the new moon.	26 53 49 72 95 162 78 167
Y. Persons of boorish manners (a Gelett Burgess creation).	109 87 100 47 10

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 27 of this issue.

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SRL RECORDINGS SECTION

IMPRESSIONS

THE READERS of this publication, and those they influence, should take pride in the following information. A random query to Columbia Records brings the information that, in the year following the reissue of Canteloube's "Songs of the Auvergne," as sung by Madeleine Grey, close to 12,000 albums were sold. Whether this exceeds the entire previous sale of the item, I do not know. But it is a profound commentary on the whole matter of record merchandising in this country.

We may, in this instance, have stumbled on something atypical, since the recording is unique, Mme. Grey an exceptional artist, and the material unknown in any other form. But it stands as something of a paradox that any entrepreneur should have a merchandisable property of this kind and only take advantage of its benefits under compulsion.

Columbia may regard itself as put upon to confer the benefit, and also absorb the abuse; but it may be assured that the attitude is wholly objective, and not personal. It is an affliction that flows in the blood stream of everybody in the record field, as if those who sell records look at their buyers through the inverse end of the binoculars. Or, for that matter, as if they don't look at their buyers at all, binoculars or no.

In such a situation as this, our previous proposition of a "1,000 Club" seems rather absurd as a gauge to the potential success of a desired reissue. For if there is a public, amounting to 10,000 or more, for so specialized an item as the "Chants d'Auvergne," there must easily be as many or more for the Rachmaninoff "Carnaval," or a new edition of Weingartner's orchestration of the "Hammerklavier" Sonata, or the Schumann "Fantasy"—all of which have been mentioned in our LETTERS column repeatedly in the last few months.

It would be an excellent service if all persons who bought the "Chants d'Auvergne" and would care to be considered the nucleus of a public for future reissues, would enter their names with us. A simple postcard bearing the words: "I bought 'Chants d'Auvergne'," plus name and address, would suffice. It will be of value to all concerned.

IRVING KOLODIN,
EDITOR, *SRL* RECORDINGS.

NOVEMBER 1949

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The Saturday Review of Recordings

Richard Strauss as I Knew Him

CESAR SAERCHINGER

AT THE end of World War I Richard Strauss, then fifty-five, had reached the apex of his career. He had already created all the works that have become part of the standard repertoire: all the symphonic works from "Don Juan" to the "Alpensymphonie," all the operas from "Salome" to the "Rosenkavalier" and "Ariadne," all the best-known songs, including "Morgen" and "Traum durch die Dämmerung."

That was reason enough for an aspiring American newspaperman to seek him out shortly after the Armistice, when he turned up as chief conductor of the State Opera of Berlin—especially when the trail led down the second-floor corridor to a luxury suite of the Adlon Hotel, favorite haunt of all the Berlin correspondents of the time. There I found the great man, recovering from an attack of grippe and engaged in a quiet game of Skat. The interview, Strauss's first contact with America after the war, had therefore to be postponed.

Eventually he received me, his long, loose-jointed figure wrapped in a dressing gown and a quizzical frown on his ruddy face. True to his reputation as a businessman, he began by berating America because we had stopped performing modern German music during the war, including the works of Richard Strauss (which meant a substantial loss in royalties and performing rights). I admitted our foolish error, but pointed out that the British had continued to play German music throughout the war. "Why of course," he retorted with a twinkle in his eye. "They couldn't possibly play only English music. That would be too much even for an Englishman!"

This, I learned, was typical Strauss. He was never at a loss for a barbed retort.

Lying on the piano were three enormous volumes of manuscript — his latest opera, "The Woman Without a Shadow," which was soon to experience a sensational non-success. "I see you've been working," I remarked for the sake of conversation. "Certainly," he answered, "what else could a man do in these miserable times? One couldn't travel, one couldn't eat (at least not properly), and one couldn't amuse oneself—with a war going on. So there's the result. It will be produced in Vienna on October 1st, in Dresden on October 13th, in . . .," he continued, reeling off a long list of premières.

Gradually he warmed up and delivered himself of some unorthodox opinions—on the war, on the Kaiser, on musical life in Germany, and on his plans for Salzburg. Salzburg, birthplace of his beloved Mozart, had become his *idée-fixe*. It was to be a festival city to out-Bayreuth Bayreuth, a mecca for music lovers from all over the world. He and Max Reinhardt were going to run it, producing all the great dramas from Sophocles to Shakespeare, and the great operas from Monteverdi to Strauss. All they needed was a paltry million dollars. "Don't you know somebody who wants to get rid of that much money? Or some American heiress with a few surplus pearls? All for the glory of art!" I promised to think it over.

Next time I saw Strauss he was conducting Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," a performance I shall never forget. If Strauss had not been the greatest composer of his generation, he would still be remembered as one of the really great conductors of his time. When "in the mood" he was superb. He got maximum results with minimum motion. He

—*Caricature by B. F. Dolbin.*

Richard Strauss conducting—"maximum results with minimum motion."

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produced the most poignant nuances with a flick of the wrist, the most impressive climaxes with a slight bend of the knees. When preoccupied, or bored, his performance was sheer routine. But his reputation as a conductor was overshadowed by his fame as a composer. The great public idolized him whenever he appeared, not so much because he was a great conductor but because he was Richard Strauss. His bitterest conducting rival was Felix Weingartner, certainly one of the greatest baton virtuosos of the time. Weingartner was said to be intriguing for the Number One post at the Vienna Opera, which Strauss occupied in addition to his conducting job in Berlin.

I mention all this because it is pertinent to what follows.

In 1921 an American friend of mine, representing the Brunswick phonograph interests, had the idea of bringing Strauss to the United States for a concert tour, conducting his own works. He asked me to "take soundings," and I called Strauss at his Vienna apartment, appropriately located at Mozartstrasse 1. The answer was an emphatic "no." *"I 'will mei' Ruh,"* he said in his undiluted Bavarian dialect. "I want to be left in peace."

"But look, your admirers in America haven't seen you conduct for twenty years," said I, remembering the "shocking" but profitable occasion when the great Strauss conducted a concert in Wanamaker's auditorium. "No," he insisted, "if I travel at all, I prefer to look at some baroque palaces and cathedrals over here."

Then, with a malicious wink, he added: "Anyhow, why don't you take Weingartner? *He composes, too.*"

So that seemed to be that. But next day I was invited to sit in Strauss's box at the Opera, and see him conduct "Tristan und Isolde." In the box with me were his wife, the redoubtable Frau Pauline, and "Franzl" (also known as "Bubi"), the six-foot-plus son and heir. Sitting directly over the brass and tympani section of the orchestra, I got my first inkling as to who was boss in the Strauss family. Pauline was the daughter of a Bavarian general and a top sergeant in her own right.

Pauline, I felt, was responsible for my presence in the box. No doubt she had a word with Richard about the offer from America for twenty concerts at $1,000 each—a princely sum if translated into inflated marks or crowns. Strauss was obviously impressed, but when we talked about it again he said that he understood we paid twice as much to "mere tenors." "Yes," I answered, "if they are sensational attractions, like Caruso, who fill a three-ring circus." "Well," he shot back, "either I am a circus or I don't go."

The upshot of it all was a "compromise" which netted Strauss a neat $30,000—ten conducting engagements, and ten concerts in which he was to accompany Elisabeth Schumann in Strauss songs. The contract also included full traveling expenses for Strauss, Frau Pauline, and Bubi. When my friend balked at this, Strauss reassured him by saying Pauline wouldn't come along anyway; she hated the sea. "Then why put her in the contract?" "Ah," said Strauss, "if you leave her out, she'll insist on coming—even in a hurricane."

It all turned out according to plan. Pauline stayed home, and Bubi, then a student at Heidelberg, got leave of absence because, according to Papa, "America would be a better education for him than books." The tour was only an "artistic" success, and Strauss's managers collected prestige at the price of a hefty deficit. But the Herr Doktor played Skat with admiring friends all the way across America, and so (according to jealous colleagues) doubled his "take."

Strauss was kind and even generous in his own patrician and rather offhand way. In financial matters he was simply punctilious and businesslike to a degree. Although, like Mozart, the son of a professional musician, his background and mores were those of the prosperous commercial class. And, unlike Mozart, he never knew adversity or want. He lived the life of the cultured and fastidious gentleman, and enjoyed the good things of this earth.

My most vivid recollection of Strauss, the "perpetual college boy," as someone called him, is his visit to Paris in the autumn of 1921, on his way to New York. Strauss knew his Paris and loved it. He hadn't seen it since prewar days and he had planned the three days so as to get the most out of them—for himself, for Mme. Schumann (who had never seen Paris), and especially for Bubi, the overgrown adolescent, playing hookey from Heidelberg.

I met the trio at the Gare de l'Est, as they stepped off the *wagon-lit* from Munich. Strauss, bursting with health and high spirits, greeted me by announcing the program for the first day: lunch at Prunier's on oysters and langouste (and would I go early so we'd be sure to get seats?); then to the Louvre, to enjoy just a few *Zuckerln* (sweetmeats)—his favorite paintings; then a drive in the Bois de Boulogne, and the rest would be up to me.

We carried this through with pedantic precision, throwing in a visit to the Invalides, where we inspected the railroad car in which the Armistice had been signed, while Bubi indulged himself in some chauvinistic remarks. Strauss cut him short with a tirade on the stupidity of war, in which the nations' creative youth paid with their lives for the mistakes of the old *Dummköpfe* sitting safely behind the lines.

—*International News Photo.*

Leopold Stokowski and Richard Strauss in Philadelphia, 1921—"Either I am a circus or I don't go."

In the evening, Strauss asked if I would help him show Bubi Paris—or rather, "what a country boy from Garmisch imagines Paris to be like." It turned out to be the Folies Bergères, where the vogue of the "semi-nude" was then at its height. The show was outrageously garish, the music noisily Parisian. But Strauss was delighted.

Incidentally, Bubi's "education" was making strides. His attitude to the French softened from tableau to tableau, as the costumes became scantier and scantier. Between the acts he was shown the traditional Folies Bergères demonstration of the *can-can* and the *danse du ventre*. "You see," explained his father with comic seriousness, "this is important for Bubi, because it is the historical basis of "Salome's Dance,"

(*Continued on page* 62)

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KOUSSEVITZKY—*Symphony No. 4, in F Minor, Op. 36* and *Waltz (from Serenade in C, Op. 48 for String Orch.)*—Tchaikovsky. Boston Symphony Orch. Five records.

MILSTEIN—*Concerto in A Minor, Op. 82* and *Meditation, Op. 32*—Glazounoff. RCA Victor Orchestra, William Steinberg, Conductor. Album of three records.

MONTEUX—*Fête Polonaise (Le Roi Malgré Lui)*—Chabrier. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Single record.

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Lily McCormack Recalls

IN HER wholly disarming and thoroughly absorbing reminiscences of her famous husband titled "I Hear You Calling Me,"* Lily McCormack has some observations of special interest to the legion of the singer's recording enthusiasts. As, for example:

. "While waiting to hear from Maestro Sabatini (his first Italian singing master, who also happened to be the father of the celebrated author of 'Scaramouche' and other novels) John went over to London, where he was engaged to make eight phonograph records for the Edison Company, and later ten for the Edison Bell Company. The industry was then in its infancy, and for these ten cylinder records he was paid the breathtaking sum of fifty pounds. 'His Master's Voice,' then called the Gramophone Company, engaged him to make ten for them at the same fee. With a hundred pounds in his pocket and all expenses paid John felt established as a singer." [This was 1904, when McCormack was twenty.]

"In later years he got the greatest fun out of playing his record of 'Killarney,' made at this time, for some of his musical friends—telling them it had been done by an Irish boy who wanted his opinion as to whether he should take up a singing career. John writes [in his unpublished "Memoirs"]: 'Without exception every one of them, including such an excellent critic as my friend Dr. Walter Starke, said: "Oh, Lord, John, don't advise that poor boy to study singing. It is too pathetic for words."' Then John would show them the name on the record, and laugh until the tears came."

* * *

Concerning critics, Mrs. McCormack recalls the following: "John invariably read the newspaper comments on his work, and I often heard him say: 'The artists who claim they never read their reviews are lying. We read them all, every word, even though they make us mad as Hades.' When he had a bad review, he'd say: 'Now, take this! I'm going to write this fellow a letter that'll curl his hair and show him he doesn't know what he's talking about.' After a while he'd come along all smiles and say, 'I wrote that beggar a four-page letter telling him what I thought of him.' 'Is it posted yet?' I'd ask. 'Not yet,' he'd answer sheepishly. 'I tore it up and chucked it in the wastebasket. Anyway, I've gotten it off my chest. Now I feel better.' . . . When he got a *good* press notice, he was like a child, following me about the house and wanting to know *why* I must do this or that instead of sitting down and talking it over."

* * *

Are artists conscious of the accomplishments which show them at their best, or do they want to be liked for things which, really, they cannot do? The musical world is in general agreement that McCormack's "Il Mio Tesoro" from Mozart's "Don Giovanni" is one of the memorable singing accomplishments in the half century, 1900-50 (RCA Victor 15-1015). What did McCormack think of it?

"I have frequently been asked," notes Lily McCormack, "which were John's favorite operas. I'd say 'Don Giovanni' and 'La Bohème.' . . . He adored singing Mozart and said: 'I love "Don Giovanni" so much I never go to my dressing room. I stand in the wings and listen to every note. As a result I can sing everybody's part.' About his recording of 'Il Mio Tesoro,' he said: 'If my reputation as a singer is to be judged in the future by any particular record of mine, I am willing to stand or fall by "Il Mio Tesoro." My wife informs me that the immortal George Bernard Shaw told her how much he liked it. Knowing his affection for Mozart's music and his intimate knowledge of it, that is some compliment.'"

* * *

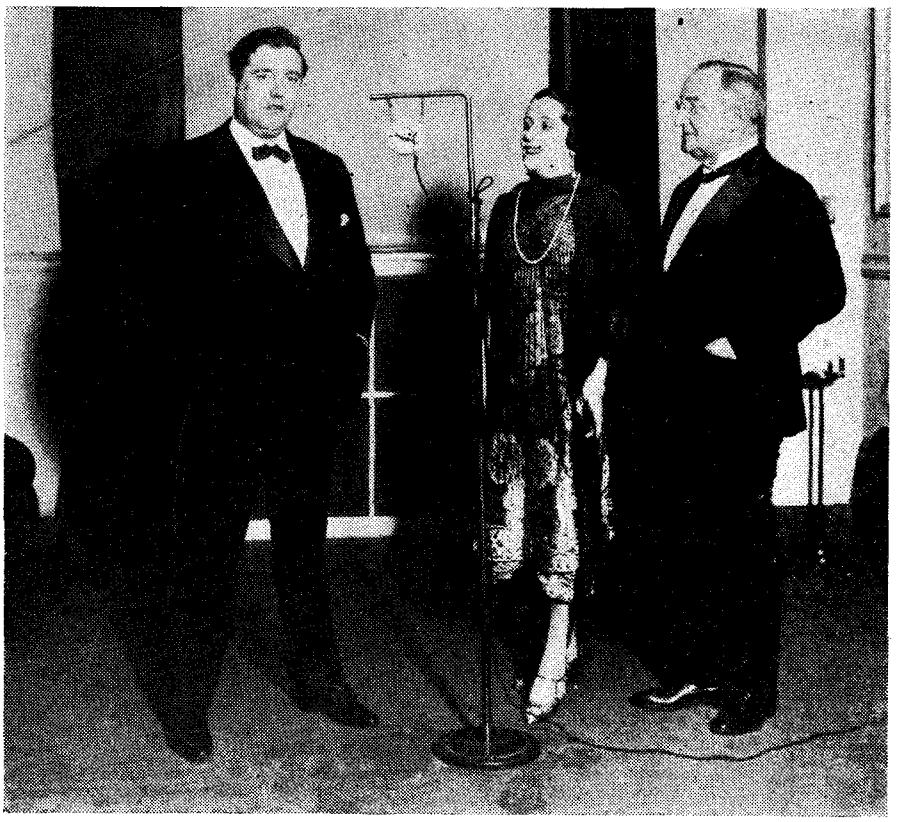
Shortly after his American debut, in 1909, McCormack was approached by a representative of the Victor Company, in New York. What ensued can best be described in his own words:

"To one of my first opera performances came the head of the Artists' Department of the Victor Talking Machine Company. He was pleased with my work and asked me to make a test record of an operatic aria and an Irish ballad ('Tu che Dio Spiegati l'Aie' from 'Lucia' and 'Killarney'). They were excellent, and I think they are still in the catalogue.

"I was offered a contract immediately, but unfortunately I had two more years to sing for the Odeon Company in London. The Victor Company cabled to London and asked the Odeon Company how much they would accept to release me. Then the Victor Company cabled the Gramophone Company in London asking them to pay half of the release—they had a working agreement about their artists. My old friends the Gramophone Company thought the Victor Company had suddenly gone crazy.

"Well perhaps they had. In any case, the Victor Company paid the two thousand pounds, and on February 10, 1910, gave me a contract which does not lapse until February 1938. [These excerpts are from the "Memoirs" written by McCormack in 1936, but never published.] I received ten thou-

*I HEAR YOU CALLING ME. By Lily McCormack. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co. 228 pp. $2.75. To be published Nov. 15.



John McCormack and Lucrezia Bori broadcasting from New York to London. At right is Calvin Childs of the Victor Company.

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sand dollars in advance and 10 per cent of the list price of the records."

* * *

Record making, while McCormack was in America, was often reserved for the Easter season, when the family would take a holiday in Atlantic City, and John would spend part of the time in Camden. Mrs. McCormack notes: "John was a perfectionist about his work and would rather do a record over a dozen times than pass it, if he felt it had the slightest flaw. One year Harriet and Fritz Kreisler, Rachmaninoff, Teddy Schneider [McCormack's accompanist], John, and I went to hear the tests of the first records Fritz and John had made of Rachmaninoff's songs. . . . I could hardly breathe, and kept stealing a glance at each one in turn. Fritz and John kept their eyes fixed on the floor while the records were being played and Rachmaninoff kept his eyes closed. At the end he came over and put his arms around them, saying 'Bravo! Bravo!' "

* * *

Among the many notables of his generation who paid McCormack tribute was one who might have also been a singer had not the native talent of the Irish turned him in another direction. During a visit to Paris, in 1920, McCormack received the following letter from a contestant who finished second in the bass competition at the Dublin Fest of 1903, in which McCormack won the tenor award:

> Dear McCormack: In the general confusion the other afternoon I had not an opportunity to tell you how delighted we were by your singing, especially the aria from "Don Giovanni." I have lived in Italy practically ever since we last met but no Italian lyrical tenor that I know (Bonci possibly excepted) could do such a feat of breathing and phrasing—to say nothing of the beauty of tone, in which, I am glad to see, Roscommon can leave the peninsula a fair distance behind. . . .
>
> Sincerely yours,
> JAMES JOYCE.

* * *

Those who esteem McCormack as a phenomenon purely of the English-speaking world may be interested in the opinions expressed during a post-World-War-I visit to the Continent:

"We have witnessed," his manager wrote to Mrs. McCormack, "great demonstrations at the Hippodrome (New York), Symphony Hall in Boston, Sydney, and elsewhere, but I can truthfully say that the ovations in both Berlin and Prague were greater. Had the crowd in Prague been as large as a Hippodrome audience they would have been heard in Paris almost. . . . The ovation following the Beethoven aria in Berlin was simply colossal. I don't think I have ever seen our tenor so deeply touched."

Looking Backwards— John McCormack

ROBERT MOLLOY

ACCORDING to a story which John McCormack himself told, the Irish tenor, out for a stroll, encountered Enrico Caruso.

"Good morning, Enrico," said McCormack in Italian, which he spoke well. "How is the world's greatest tenor this morning?"

"Giovanni," Caruso replied, "since when have you become a basso?"

Dyed-in-the-wool McCormack fans see nothing extravagant in that. For them, the popular lyric tenor's rare

John McCormack in "Faust," Dublin, 1906 — "distinction of line and clarity of enunciation."

combination of subtlety and warmth was more than sufficient to make up for what he may have lacked in robustness of timbre.

There were, however, lots of detractors. Although he was one of the most popular singers of the first two-fifths of this century, and although his death at sixty-two rang down the curtain on an age of high vocal standards of which only a few representatives have lingered, McCormack has for the most part been treated with good-natured contempt. This was undoubtedly due in large part to his willingness to sing songs that would appeal to the widest audience, and even to the fact that he performed them without condescension. Occasionally a perceptive critic would point out the sterling qualities of his art—H. T. Parker's "Eighth Notes" contains a brief essay which is a case in point—but he was too successful to be stomached by the average vocal teacher. He was usually dismissed as a pleasant singer of ballads, a view in which the Victor list more and more concurred. The HMV catalogue was more just.

Somewhat belated amends were made a year or more ago when Victor issued an album of repressings, under the inane title "John McCormack Sings Again," which contained some of his more serious repertoire along with such items as "Mother Machree" and "Macushla." Some of these repressings have been souped up, but in this case to advantage. For, although one of the most popular of all recorded singers, McCormack was not, in general, vocally flattered by his discs. The acoustical records had a tendency to whiten his tones, making him sound rather like a countertenor, and the electrical process, particularly as his voice became a bit dryer and darker in later years, gave a wiry sound and exaggerated his strong Irish accent.

The listener who can disassociate his mind from preconceptions and listen to McCormack's more serious recorded repertoire will find much to impress him. As it is with Toscanini, McCormack's fundamental assets were simplicity and exactness. You will find few exaggerated ritards or distortions of phrase, but you will find an almost unerring choice of pace (yes, I know that Toscanini sometimes goes too fast). You will find distinction of line, the right amount of dynamic contrast, and of course the much admired clarity of enunciation which even the hostile conceded and which never at any time degenerated into parlando. McCormack had all the graces of bel canto—clean fioritura, liquid trills, delicate execution of gruppetti.

The voice itself, to which, I repeat, the phonograph has not done entire justice, was in the concert hall a genuine lyric tenor, rich and full-bodied and of ample range, sometimes with a nasal coloring which records exaggerated. To make a comparison which could be qualified, it was rather like Tagliavini's voice, or Gigli's in his more intelligent moments. Of moderate size, though by no means small, it sounded just as good from the balcony of Carnegie Hall as from the

(*Continued on page 61*)

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Reviews of the Month

LP activity continues to provide the most that is stimulating in this month's record issues, with Puccini's "Turandot" successfully converted, likewise Stravinsky's "Jeu de Cartes" and a pair of welcome Haydn quartets. Note, too, the debut of Nathan Milstein on the RCA Victor label, in the Glazounow concerto, and the first Rachmilovich discs for Capitol. Opera-goers will be interested in a disc by Paul Schoeffler, the Metropolitan's new baritone.

"Turandot" Revived

PUCCINI: *"Turandot." Gina Cigna, soprano, Francesco Merli, tenor, Magda Olivero, soprano, etc., with EIAR Symphony Orchestra and chorus conducted by Franco Ghione.* (Cetra-Soria LP set 1206, $17.85.)

For those who were not opera-goers at the Metropolitan in the late Twenties, when this work was current, or could not spare the $35.70 to acquire the Parlophone pressings, in which this recording previously circulated, Cetra-Soria's three LP's will amount to a virtual introduction to Puccini's last, uncompleted opera. Technically, of course, it stands as complete because the dramatic situation was carried through (from the point in the third act at which Puccini had arrived when he died) by Franco Alfano. But as Puccini's great friend—and certainly well-wisher—Gatti-Casazza has noted, Puccini was traditionally a careful and conscientious worker who doubtless would have edited his score in the light of public performance or private rehearsal. That, of course, no one else could dare to do.

Whether one will tolerate its languors for its unquestionable stretches of magnificence will doubtless be closely related to one's affection for the lyric muse of Puccini. To be sure, "Turandot" has overtones of "Butterfly" as well as undertones of "Aïda" (the central romance involves royalty of warring nations), but it is also a certainty that no composer of our day save Puccini could have written it. That such sections as "Signor ascolta," "Non piangere, Liù," "In questa Reggia," "Nessun dorma," and the "Death of Liù" have become independently celebrated is even less a key to the score than it is in "Tosca," say, for here Puccini was working in a symphonic scope decidedly more ambitious than any other score of his known to me. A Moussorgskyian chorus, a frequently Straussian orchestra are but two of many elements indicative of a new trend in Puccini's talent.

As apprehended from this recording —the only one to date—it would seem well worth an American revival, assuming that a soprano of Jeritza's presence and the requisite voice could be discovered. That Cigna is (or was) that soprano, I doubt. The cruelly high tessitura produces, from her, much that is exacerbating, too little that is exhilarating. The others of this cast, however, are uniformly excellent, especially Merli, in the long and difficult role of the Unknown Prince, and Olivero in the shorter but no less arduous part of Liù. Ghione's conducting has every mark of authority, and a degree of intensity in the climaxes which our local performances of Italian opera have all but lost.

The Italian recording technique of the late Thirties, relative to the choral masses, the intricate orchestration, the extremities of range in "Turandot," was not sufficiently advanced to give the LP converters an ideal product with which to work. However, they have done a splendid job within the existing limitations. The voices are sometimes more prominent than the best balance decrees, the orchestra somewhat undervalued, but there is an uncanny sense of actuality in the experience, without which a recorded "Turandot" would be dull going. Dull this one certainly is not.

Glazounow for All

GLAZOUNOW: *Symphony No. 4 in B flat, Opus 48. Jacques Rachmilovich conducting the symphony orchestra of the Academy of Santa Cecilia, Rome.* (Capitol-Telefunken LP 8027 $3.85.)

GLAZOUNOW: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 82. Nathan Milstein with orchestra directed by William Steinberg.* (RCA Victor album 1315, $4.75; WDM 1315, $3.35.)

Listening to this live, limber, and enjoyable symphony—a product of 1893, when Glazounow was but twenty-eight, and still in thrall to such of his predecessors as Borodin and Glinka—makes one wonder what it is that confers currency on music. In the case of Glazounow, it is, perhaps, easier to say what doesn't: for he was not a popular virtuoso such as Rachmaninoff, to whose muse his may be compared, or a dour, austere figure of legend, such as Sibelius. This work may not aspire to the weight of those by the Finn, but if there were a formula for measuring the musical gold they contain, I do not doubt it would assay as high.

—Joe Covello-Black Star.

Nathan Milstein—"a pertinent, powerful, and well-phrased statement."

At heart, I believe that Glazounow was as much a composer for the theatre as Tchaikovsky (ballet) or Rimsky-Korsakoff (opera), but he has here managed to channel his impulses in the symphonic stream of Schumann and Schubert, if not Beethoven and Brahms. That is to say, a work in which melodic ideas rather than thematic germs determine the style of treatment. Since the end product is a free, rhapsodic musical expression, the niceties of procedure may be left to the musicologists. Rachmilovich has excellent manpower at his disposal (the orchestra is substantially that known also as the Augusteo) and the original recording of this spring—March 1949—has been converted into an American LP of clarity and good balance, if not notable resonance. It tracks well, with no undue surface comment.

Milstein's initial venture for Victor —he has for all of his previous career recorded for Columbia—is a considerable success, if but a qualified triumph. Relative to his own abilities, he has accomplished a pertinent, powerful, and well-phrased statement of these familiar patterns, but the previous RCA Victor issue offers all this, and Heifetz, too. Those who consider superior reproduction an irresistible lure may be unhappy without this supple, glistening performance; but there is a measure of insight and outspokenness in the Heifetz-Barbirolli which this one lacks. In addition, the eager microphone often merges soloist and orchestra in a way not desirable in this kind of special-purpose score. The 45 rpm

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has much brilliance, also more shallowness of sound than the 78, further immersing the Milstein violin in the Steinberg background.

Reger, Kabalevsky, Stravinsky

REGER: *"Serenade," Opus 95. Eugen Jochum conducting the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra.* (Capitol-Telefunken album ECL 8026, $7.50; LP 8026, $4.85.)

KABALEVSKY: *Symphony No. 2, Opus 19. Jacques Rachmilovich conducting the Symphony Orchestra of the Academy of Santa Cecilia, Rome.* (Capitol-Telefunken album ECL 8032, $5; LP 8032, $3.85.)

STRAVINSKY: *"Jeu de Cartes." The composer conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.* (Capitol-Telefunken album FCL 8028, $5.75; LP 8028, $3.85.)

The process of re-education about Max Reger which began last spring with Capitol's issue of his "Böcklin Suite" continues with the most illuminating contribution to date. If the intervening "Variations on a Theme by Mozart" were more or less of the pedantic persuasion expected of him, this "Serenade" is a score of dazzling freshness, melodic invention, and orchestral mastery. Perhaps its most likely predecessors are the Brahms "Serenades" of Opus 17, but this is not only far better music than either of those, but much more ambitious in scope and successful in execution.

If you can conceive a Dvorak with the intellectual power of a Richard Strauss, you have something of the effect this work conveys to me. It dates from 1906, when Reger was thirty-seven, and shows him a melodist akin to Strauss, Sibelius, and Elgar, among recent contemporaries, one of the dwindling company to possess that gift. Jochum's performance is a thoroughly convincing one, not only lyric where appropriate but urgent and incisive as well. The string tone is a little coarse in the LP, and there is no great tonal luxuriance at any time, but the musical experience is there for all to savor.

One disaffecting element in all these Capitol-Telefunken LP's is an apparent misapprehension of what LP is all about: for the Reger is broken in the middle of the third movement, the Kabalevsky—a busy, "dramatic," and not very absorbing piece—in the middle of the second, and the Stravinsky likewise. It is possible that this Reger was just unworkable, for the full content of two twelve-inch sides has been used. However, both the Kabalevsky and the Stravinsky are on ten-inch discs, a dubious economy when it re-

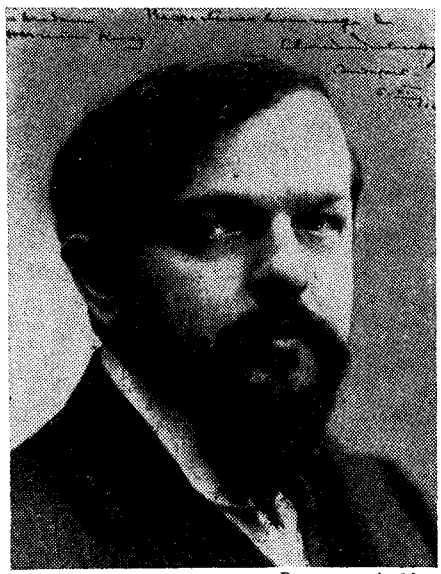
(*Continued on page* 55)

Images of Melancholy

DEBUSSY: *"Images pour Orchestre." Ernest Ansermet conducting the Suisse Romande Orchestra.* (London LLP 44, $5.85.)

"Ibéria" is the second of Debussy's three "Images pour Orchestre." It has been recorded nine times, and rarely does a major symphony orchestra let a season go by without programming it at least once. But what of its two companion pieces? "Gigues" and "Rondes de Printemps" have languished in obscurity. To understand why, we must first take note of the refusal of Debussyites to come to terms with this composer's evolving modes of expression. By the time Debussy embarked on the "Images" many of his earlier esthetic notions had been abandoned. We find at this juncture of his creative development that muted languor has given way to crystalline forthrightness; he is now more concerned with formal patterns, with the weaving together of horizontal melodic strands; his infatuation with misty vertical chords has abated. Debussy has changed. He no more resembles the composer of "L'Après-midi d'un faune" than the Wagner of "Tristan" resembles the Wagner of "Tannhäuser." But for some reason Debussy is expected to have remained static, and this has engendered considerable confusion. Thus it is that listeners are sometimes disappointed with the "Images," finding them too brisk, too angular in contour, not the "real Debussy."

That "Ibéria" has survived this misunderstanding is due partly to the poetic literary headings which precede each movement, partly to the intensity and vitality of its invention. "Gigues" and "Rondes de Printemps" are endowed with less programmatic significance. And they are, admittedly, compounded of a lower order of creative genius. We can say the same of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony in relation to the Ninth, yet not banish it from our concert halls.



—*Bettmann Archive.*

A presentation photo from Claude Debussy to a friend—"muted languor has given way to crystalline forthrightness."

"Gigues," the first of these "Images," is the least accessible. The English jig, usually a merry, carefree dance, is here charged by Debussy with bitter melancholy. As first enunciated by the oboe d'amore the jig resembles, in mood and timbre if not in melody, that doleful piping on the English horn which opens the last act of "Tristan." Soon this sad jig is woven into an active, pulsating fabric. In this ambivalence between melancholy melodic material and nervous, impelling rhythms lies the score's difficulty. But here is an instance where familiarity breeds respect: respect not only for the technical craftsmanship which Debussy manifests, but also for his ability to transmit the desolation of a soul without once wearing his heart on his sleeve.

"Rondes de Printemps" presents a similar contradiction. The arrival of spring is a subject which ordinarily calls for both rejoicing and refulgence. Debussy acknowledges this in his music, but cannot refrain from commenting that the inevitable outcome of spring is fall and winter. Again we remark that noble and profound melancholy, more powerful in its very reticence, which Debussy shares with his great compatriots Flaubert and Cézanne.

I shall say little about this particular recording. London is to be commended for waxing the "Images" *in toto* and for assigning it to so distinguished a conductor and orchestra. However, this LP disc cannot be called a success. As Mr. Burke points out (page 58), there is little homogeneity to the sound. Moreover, the surface noise often obliterates the delicacy of Debussy's scoring, and there is one point where a sloppy job of splicing leaves an awkward hiatus in the music's flow. We expect better of a record which bears the proud initials of ffrr, and I feel sure London will soon make improvements. In view of these deficiencies it would be unfair to dwell long on Ansermet's interpretation. Let me voice the hope, however, that London will retain in its catalogue the Munch waxing of "Ibéria." Admirable as Ansermet's reading is, I feel that Munch brings a more imaginative approach to the complex rhythms and tonal balances of this buoyant score.

—ROLAND GELATT.

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Recordings Reports on Classical Releases

See Page 65 for Pop Report

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Anderson: "Sleigh Ride." Fiedler conducting the Boston "Pops" Orchestra. Victor 10-1481, $1.	Connoisseurs of "Pops" recordings will note a rounder sonority, a richer blend of sound in this fine reproduction than that to which they are accustomed. Also an uncommonly gay invention by Anderson, of which the highest praise is that it is worthy of Eric Coates himself.
Bach: "Italian Concerto." Edith Weiss-Mann, harpsichord. Allegro LA 5, $3.85.	The first new version of this in a considerable time, and the first ever on LP. It comes off reasonably well, considering that Weiss-Mann is one of the more muscular harpsichordists, and the sponsors have chosen to provide the listener with all the pedal and mechanism noises of the harpsichord. The "Concerto After Benedetto Marcello" is the overside, and generally a lesser work. Clean, slightly brittle sound throughout.
Beethoven: Trio in E flat, Opus 70, No. 2. Alma Trio. Allegro LA 4, $4.85.	More good repertory from Allegro, this time matched with thoroughly able performance, the trio's members being Roman Totenberg, violin, Adolph Baller, piano, and Gabor Retjo, cello. Highly integrated, well-sounding performance of this work, which has been unjustly obscured by the "Geister." With it is a lively playing of Haydn's G major Trio (with the "Gypsy" Rondo). In both cases, the LP is mechanically excellent, the tonal fidelity and balance splendid.
Brahms: "Hungarian Dances," Nos. 1 and 3. Clemens Krauss conducting the London Symphony. London R. 1011, $2.10.	A graceful respite from Brucker masses and Von Einem "Concertos," played in crisp, idiomatic manner by Krauss, and suavely reproduced. The third (rarely favored on records) is particularly welcome for its interesting suggestions of both Dvorak and Grieg.
Caccini: "Amarilli," other songs. Licia Albanese, soprano, with Victor Trucco, piano. RCA Victor album 1316, $4; WMO 1316, $3.35.	A much thinner, shriller version of this song than was recently offered, on London, by Suzanne Danco. Mme. Albanese, in fact, is vocally luxuriant in only two of her six songs: Szulc's "Clair de Lune" and Campbell-Tipton's "Spirit Flower," for strain and stress are much too evident in Tchaikovsky's "Lullaby" (Opus 16, No. 1), Liszt's "Oh! quand je dors," and A. Scarlatti's "Se florindo è fedele." Suitable reproduction, somewhat lacking depth in the 45 rpm.
Cardillo: "Core 'ngrato." Mario Lanza, tenor, with orchestra directed by C. Callinicos. RCA Victor 12-1026, $1.25; WDM 1330, 95¢.	Much the best of a batch of discs by the latest "second Caruso." Lanza is far from that: rather a young man gifted with a superb voice of indefinite size. Till he has been heard without benefit of amplification nothing more can be said. He sings these Neapolitan songs (the overside is "Mamma mia che vo' sape?") in the proper tear-drenched tones, but the same in "Che gelida manina" and "Celeste Aida" are loud, vulgar, and not very funny. As for Kern's "They Didn't Believe Me," Lanza is both in the wrong church and the wrong pew. Powerful reproduction, especially the 45 rpm.
Chabrier: "Fête Polonaise." Monteux conducting the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor 12-0978, $1.25.	A rather more ingenious piece than the title suggests, this excerpt from "Le Roi Malgré Lui" is in the good, rousing, boisterous manner of Chabrier's "Marche Joyeuse" and "Bourrée Fantasque." Monteux is no man to spare an accent, resulting in a performance of breadth and vivacity. Good conventional recording, a little wanting in string resonance.
Donizetti: "Spirito gentil," etc. Eugene Conley, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Alberto Erede. London LLP 26, $5.85.	Dazzling virtuosity by the American Conley, in this air especially, but also in various others by Bizet, Gounod, Flotow, Verdi, and Puccini (two "Toscas," a "Bohème," and a "Turandot"). The conventional arias range from good to excellent, but Conley's clean, hard-hitting top tones make exciting listening in the Donizetti. One of London's better LP's in sound, also.
Handel: "Timotheous Cries." Trevor Anthony, bass, with the London Symphony conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. London T. 5157, $2.10.	A hitherto urecorded air from "Alexander's Feast," sung with taste and understanding by Anthony, also a rounder quality of voice than was heard from him in the Beecham version of "Messiah." Very sprightly work by Sargent in the bright first section, well modulated pathos thereafter.
Rachmaninoff: "Vocalise." Lily Pons, soprano, with Andre Kostelanetz and orchestra. Columbia 3-241, 90¢.	Though one would not think it likely, this is one of the rare recordings of this "Vocalise" by a vocalist—most others have been by orchestras. Miss Pons has too much ho-ho-ho in her tones for my taste, but it is otherwise well sung. There have been better versions of Rimsky's "Rose and the Nightingale" than hers on the reverse side.
Respighi: "Arie di Corte." Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia 3-190, 90¢.	I can hardly commend this seven-inch microgroove, with its break in the middle of a relatively brief piece, when there is doubtless an LP on the way of which it will be a consecutive part. Otherwise deft playing of a well-arranged excerpt from Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances."
Sieczynski: "Wien, du stadt meiner träume." Mario Berini, tenor, with orchestra conducted by Max Rudolf. Columbia 3-294, 90¢.	This record is obviously for listening, not for reviewing; for a seidel or two of *dunkles* would doubtless make its leisurely tempo sound just right. Berini sings this and the overside "Ich muss wieder einmal in Grinzing sein" with fine vocal quality, uncommon enunciation of the text, and a full measure of support from Rudolf.
Schubert: "Der Lindenbaum" and "Die Post." Heinrich Schlusnus, baritone, with Sebastian Peschko, piano. London T 5160. $2.10.	The postwar voice of Schlusnus, in unexpected amplitude and abundance. Only one with an aficionado's ear for Schusnus's peerless best would note here or there a strain for a top tone or a blemish in production. Otherwise these are performances to be compared only with his own. Superbly clear recording, ideal for lieder.
Schubert: Trio in E flat, Opus 100. Alma Trio. Allegro LA 1, $4.85.	Unequal reproduction on LP is the bane of this worthy enterprise, played by the personnel noted for the Beethoven trio above. The playing is able, though inclined to spurn the fine points of Schubert's writing, but it is the wiry violin and percussive piano which are particularly disaffecting. The Beethoven is not so afflicted.
Wagner: "Wahn, Wahn" ("Die Meistersinger"). Paul Schoeffler with the National Symphony conducted by Karl Rankl. London T. 5159, $2.10.	The most of this superb scene to be heard on records since the days when the Schorr recording was considered a reasonable likeness of voice and orchestra. Schoeffler does not command the exceptional sweetness of nature that Schorr conveyed, but his rich, meaty voice (soon to be heard at the Metropolitan) is supervised with complete understanding and a wealth of expressive detail. Rankl collaborates sensitively, and the Kingsway Hallmark is on the sound. —Irving Kolodin.

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REVIEWS

(*Continued from page 53*)

sults in a sacrifice of a basic benefit of the LP method. I understand the Capitol people are limited in choice of "coupling" material, but here is a plain instance of haste making for waste.

Otherwise, the Stravinsky stands up remarkably well for a recording made a decade ago. Were one not aware of his special preference in orchestra sonorities, it might be criticized for lack of orchestral warmth and resonance. However, it is generically akin to the results he has sought in all his more recent recordings, though with the edgy sharpness and rather shrill top characteristic of these early Capitol LP's.

Two Down, ? to Go

HAYDN: *Quartets in D (Opus 64, No. 5) and B flat (Opus 76, No. 4). Budapest Quartet.* (Columbia LP ML 4246, $4.85.)

In the twenty-six issues thus far published of this magazine, I have no previous recollection of a Haydn quartet noted for the attention of its readers. Extending this total to include works issued during and after the war, the American listener may expect to have a new treatment of the eighty-three Haydn quartets by A.D. 2122—not allowing, of course, for future Petrillo bans. Why this should be so, I cannot say, save that the production may be too cheap, the public interest too keen to appeal to the sporting instincts of the record companies.

Like virtually every other quartet of Haydn which the Budapest in its Roismann-led days has been permitted to record, these two are almost infallibly right in dynamics and accents; slides, slurs, and cesuras. The impulses which make its ensemble style sometimes a little robust for Mozart are precisely suitable to Haydn; as, for example, in the Opus 64 ("Lark") quartet, in which Roismann's soaring lyric phrase, at the outset, has just the right rhythmic crispness behind it, or the Menuetto of the Opus 76 ("Sunrise"), in which all the accents graze, but do not scar, the Haydn line.

Columbia has made notable progress in its treatment of such matter in the LP medium, and there is scarcely a hint of edginess in the tone, which has abundant highs but none of the searing edge remembered in the first Beethoven and Ravel quartets on LP. Moreover, the two sides are as free of surface sound as any records I have ever heard. —IRVING KOLODIN.

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of art, but also the moral and social" —a realization that came to him when he "conducted in New York an exciting program of 'Music of Old and New Russia,' with some Red Army songs in it." What the structure of this "wider basis" may be I was unable to discover. Whenever a paragraph seemed to tremble on the brink of becoming reasonably clear, a new metaphor came along to fog things up again.

The book does make plain, however, that Mr. Saminsky possesses a phenomenal fund of contempt for his fellow composers. He expresses disdain for "the bannerbearers and the revered European governors who now lead an honorary musical existence—Schönberg and Stravinsky"; for "our own home-grown, terribly patriotic Aaron Copland, master of turn-style and wizard of *musique à succès*"; for Gershwin, whose "Rhapsody in Blue" is "already gasping for air"; for Charles Ives, whose Second String Quartet is "one long, gray trail of piffle"; for Virgil Thomson's "school," which "would almost terrorize us into being gay and spontaneous"; for Walter Piston, whose "music is but *musica distillata.*"

When Mr. Saminsky contemplates the music of his favorites, his tone changes startlingly. Having administered a round spanking to the Stravinsky disciples for their preoccupation with "design and form," he praises Emerson Whithorne's "New York Days and Nights" for its "precision of design." He admires the "élan and charm" of a funeral march by Douglas Moore, though these would scarcely appear to be the most desirable qualities a funeral march might possess. Such misplaced enthusiasm is almost the kiss of death for Professor Moore, who is an able and sensible musician but certainly not an epoch-making one, for Mr. S. praises his product at the expense of many composers who have undertaken to grapple with considerably more difficult esthetic and technical problems.

Such a pastiche of uncontrolled invective and effusive hand-kissing is really not allowable within the proper limits of professional criticism. From the point of view of objective analysis, his discussions of individual works are unreliable, since his references to passages and procedures are employed principally to document conclusions he has previously reached through personal prejudice and predilection. Musical criticism is not a matter of hating and loving either composers or their works; unless a critic proceeds from the assumption that dispassionate description is the basic, and most difficult, requirement of his task, he is certain—as Mr. Saminsky does—to leap to final judgments that are scarcely more than whims.

Over and beyond all this, however, the trouble with Mr. Saminsky's book is that nearly every page sets up insoluble problems of semantics. He is so enamored of the language of analogy that he quite forgets to require of his metaphors meanings that will be intelligible to anyone but himself. As an interpreter of values in our "living music" he has not recognized the responsibility, which he places onerously upon our composers, of "curbing everything in artistic means that is alien to his creative aim."

"Sure I heard you calling, but I'm not the only Bascom Woolsey in the world."

Music and Dance Notes

EDUCATION OF A CONCERT-GOER, by Homer Ulrich. Dodd, Mead, $4. This book should do much to bridge the gap between the professional musician and the intelligent but untrained listener. Its author does not believe that those who are unversed in his craft are necessarily morons. More power to him, say I, since in this age of specialization a professor in any branch of a college is likely to revert to the kindergarten stage when he visits the department across the hall.

Mr. Ulrich puts himself in the shoes of a new friend of music. He takes the listener through typical music situations—attending a concert; overhearing the intermission talk of people who seem to know more, and whose opinions differ from one's own; reading a critic's review; listening to records at home. Also, he provides the answers to many of the questions an untutored listener might ask. Take the matter of interpretation. How can one thoroughly enjoy X's performance of "Liebesträume" in a concert if he fears that he may read in a review the next day that everything about the performance was wrong, and the piece moreover was not worth playing? Are there no principles of interpretation which a mere listener could learn so as to make fairly sound judgments? There are, of course; and one would have to search long to find a better presentation of them than in the chapter "Play It Like This."

Other sections of the book are concerned with such matters as the mechanics of program making, the home life of orchestra musicians, and the problems of reading a score. The final chapter has to do with music in the home, and some good, common-sense suggestions are made for bringing children and music closer together. There is a good bibliography for further reading, and a time-saving list of music publishers from whom chamber music for home performances can be obtained.

—PETER HANSEN.

MOMENTS MOUSICAL, by Deems Taylor. Ziff-Davis, $2.50. Nobody will deny Mr. Taylor's accomplishments as a knowing and amusing commentator on music and "the dahnce," but he's stretching the indulgence of his numerous admirers by flagrant addiction to punning in this book. In his collection of brief and obvious burlesques of opera and ballet performed by mice rather than human beings, Mr. Taylor thereby presumably dem-

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onstrates that if Dean Swift could view the race in terms of horses and apes, why not he in the form of cute, endearing little rodents?

Accordingly, with the support of Walter Kumme's drawings, which may give the reader the puzzling impression that he's strayed into the juvenile department, Mr. Taylor discusses the prehistoric mouse discovered by Moustapha Kemal in a Mousopotamian cave, pertinent ethnological evidence on the Mousetta Stone found in an old mousque by a Mouslem explorer named Mousserschmidt, and so on to Greek friezes of the petite darlings now in possession of the Moussachusetts Institute of Technology. (Recalling the mountain in labor, you see how quickly this sort of thing might become a serious mental irritant.)

Terpsichore takes its licking from Mr. Taylor as he deems (ah, there!) to analyze the morris (corruption of "mouse") dance, Spanish jotas and habaneras, the ballet "Le Lac des Souris," and the modern dance of significance as opposed to the classical revolution of "Mousadora Dunkem." The Ring operas, the Bayreuth Festival, and "Fritz Miceler" all come under the spoofs at "long-hairs," and the dedication to "Moussorgski," "Mouzart," "Moussenet," and others pointedly ignores that eminent representative of the *Familia Muridae*, the mouse who's known as Mickey. Which may prove that we're men, after all.

—Russell Rhodes.

DANCES OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, by Mila Lubinová. DANCES OF THE NETHERLANDS, by Elise Van Der Ven-Ten Bensel. DANCES OF SWEDEN, by Erik Salvén. DANCES OF SWITZERLAND, by Louise Witzig. Chanticleer. $1.25 each. These are four additions to the little series called "Handbooks of European National Dances," edited by Violet Alford and published under the joint auspices of the Royal Academy of Dancing and the Ling Physical Education Association. Dances of Austria, Finland, Greece, and Portugal already have been issued.

The present group of four follows the same format—a short introduction discussing the customs and mores behind the folk dances, notes on costumes, basic steps, and dance figures, and an analytic description of four specific dances. Simplified piano accompaniments and a few colored plates are supplied, together with short bibliographies. Each volume, by the way, totals exactly forty pages.

—Rosalyn Krokover.

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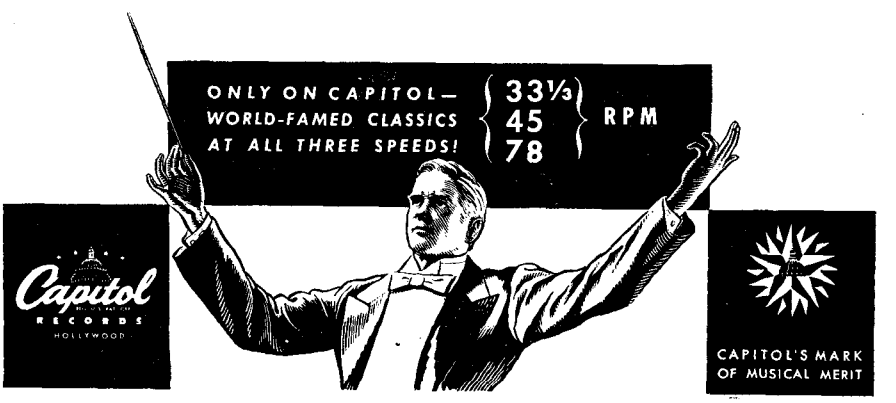

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Report on LP: Experience Will Teach

THE record-makers of the country, with one very important exception, are now manufacturing 33 1/3 rpm, microgroove, long playing records. They are moved by a natural desire to obtain a share of the profits that Columbia's enterprise has uncovered in the distribution of this kind of recording. Some months ago Mercury, Vox, Cetra, and Concert Hall anticipated the general movement and issued LP's dubbed from 78's with very good results. "General movement" is a calm phrase to describe the stampede we are witnessing. Remembering that the first fruits of the new Columbia seed included a number of lemons, purchasers may suspect the quality of the additional crops so many are rushing to produce.

Is the suspicion valid? The smaller companies have the advantage of Columbia's experience, in some cases of Columbia's active cooperation. The vicissitudes of the early LP production, when splendor and squalor might appear on the same lists, have been erased by a steady standard of high efficiency. Is this advanced stage not the point of departure for the companies now imitating Columbia?

The question seems worth investigation, and the results of the investigation follow. It should be understood that most Columbia LP's have been made originally with LP in mind, from masters made at 33 1/3 revolutions, while the non-Columbia discs examined here are in every case the result of transcription into microgrooves of music reproduced from 78's. The records chosen for comparison were the first six for which an acceptable Columbia bearing an identical composition was at hand. Naturally from such a comparison between different musicians in different places no identity of sound can be expected, but the original problem and the ultimate goal were the same, and the results hoped for must have been very much alike. Here are the results:

BARTOK: *"Concerto for Orchestra." Eduard van Beinum and the Concertgebouw Orchestra.* (London LLP 5, $5.85.) *Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.* (Columbia ML 102, $4.85.)

The London is a fair recording in which the superb qualities of ffrr are not audible. Intermittently the orchestra is as if curtained, all choirs a little obscured, particularly the wood. The faults are not great but their cumulative effect is one of great disappointment for those who retain an aural image of the ffrr 78's at their best. Bass is not clean and tends to incipient blast. Against such mediocre opposition the Columbia LP, one of the very good ones, shows an easy superiority in all tonal aspects.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 12, No. 1. Roman Totenberg and Adolph Baller.* (Allegro LA 2, $4.85.) *Joseph Szigeti and Mieczyslaw Horzowski.* (Columbia ML 4133, $4.85.)

By contemporary standards the Allegro version cannot be called a satisfactory recording. The tone of both instruments is shallow; the piano, in the first movement, blasts in the bass, and in the three movements clatters intermittently in the treble. Lacking these defects, the Columbia would be excellent if Szigeti's violin were not accompanied by a wisp of alien harmonics, a feature found on many recent Columbias, 33 1/3 and 78, and which apparently must be accepted with the same resignation granted to surface noise.

DEBUSSY: *"Ibéria." Ernest Ansermet and the Orchestra of La Suisse Romande.* (London LLP 44, $5.85.) *Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.* (Columbia ML 4021, $4.85.)

An approving nod to the good sense which put the three "Images" on one disc, "Gigues" and "Rondes de Printemps" occupying the obverse of the London "Ibéria." There are illusory merits in this recording, illusory because the brilliance of some details tends to obscure the obscurity of the mass. Percussion is clear and sharp; so are some wind passages; but the orchestra lacks homogeneity, sweep, and muscularity in the London LP, qualities conspicuously present in the fine Columbia recording of Reiner's Pittsburghers, whose LP's to date have been more consistently successful than those of any other orchestra.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D Minor. Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra.* (Capitol-Telefunken P8023, $4.85.) *Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orch.* (Columbia ML 4024, $4.85.)

A bold dubbing by Capitol good in some parts (bright brass and reasonable balance), fair in most parts (blunt and heavy bass lessening the effect of the rest), and bad for the first four minutes of the first movement, where the record has recurrent blasts. The Columbia LP is fair for the type, it has no obvious crudities, and it is certainly a more practised, a smoother example of orchestral reproduction.

RICHARD STRAUSS: *"Ein Heldenleben." Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra.* (Capitol-Telefunken P8013, $4.85.) *Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.* (Columbia ML 4138, $4.85.)

It may be that the Teutonic asseverations of this work dedicated to Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra influenced the treason by which the conductor will be remembered with the dedication. When the Telefunken recording was made he had already led intense performances of "Heldenleben" for forty years in a dozen countries. His work in this is more truly eloquent than his work in any other music, and more moving than any other conductor's work in this music. Thus Fritz Reiner's excellent performance is not really a performance of the same personal work; but the Reiner recording is better than the Mengelberg on these LP's. The differences are familiar: difficult bass on Capitol where bass is smooth on Columbia, intermittent roughnesses on the former absent from the latter, some confusion in the one, none in the other. There are, however, a few fortes on the Capitol quite magnificent, surpassing the best Columbia moments, and Capitol is inflicted with fewer extrinsic harmonics than the rival version.

FIVE random comparisons have shown five preferences for Columbia. Of the five losers only the Sonata may be called bad, but the other four did not press the winners very closely. From so small a number it would be improper to draw conclusive conclusions, but it seems prudent to deduce some tentative generalities from the results:

LP's recorded from 78's will be more variable in quality than LP's made from tape or 33's. Good quality may not be taken for granted.

Proficiency in LP recording is obtained by an empirical process and needs time. Witness the variability of the early Columbia efforts. No one is to expect that the disappointing London records noted here will not be surpassed after an experience of trial and error. The technicians who produced the peerless ffrr's are certainly capable of approximating ffrr on LP. Columbia on LP has surpassed her 78's, but that is not demanded of London. Phonophiles will be contented with a good facsimile.

—C. G. BURKE.

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THE OTHER SIDE

(IMPORTED RECORDINGS)

LONDON.

WITHIN the next few weeks the first equipment made in Britain to cope with LP discs will be reaching our shops, but there is still no sign that either of our two major groups will release the records that go with them. Decca is so busy coping with their American releases that they seem scarcely to have time for their normal home production, and their rivals are showing a marked disinclination to be first in the field. I fear that this reluctance may be due to the unexpected persistence of RCA Victor's 45 rpm discs — in other words, the situation in the States is not sufficiently clarified for EMI to take the plunge and back one side.

While we are thus still waiting for the benefits of America's great advance in recording method, I have been glad to learn that some of our very finest reproducing equipment is being shown to New Yorkers at the Audio Fair, organized by the Audio Engineering Society, at the Hotel New Yorker, October 27-29. If any *SRL* readers would like to hear the kind of equipment that I normally use as basis for my record notes, they should pay a visit to Room 50 at this Fair, where a Mr. H. J. Leak is exhibiting the best amplifier ever made in this country at a reasonable price, and a new dynamic moving-coil pickup—incorporating a diamond stylus which gives the finest results I, for one, have ever heard. (I believe that Mr. Leak is staying on at the hotel for a week after the Fair, so that it would be possible to hear his equipment until Nov. 6.) I feel sure that those who have in the past acclaimed the best work of our recording engineers will find in this reproducing gear a worthy partner to our ffrr and "Transient-True" records.

Nowadays Beethoven's G major Piano Concerto seems to be a most popular standby, for we have now had no less than three recordings of it within the last twelve months. The latest version of the No. 4 is presented by HMV with what may be described as an "all-star cast." Arthur Rubinstein is the distinguished pianist and he is aided and abetted by no less a person than Sir Thomas himself. The performance is immeasurably superior to the recent Casadesus-Ormandy set, as is the recording, but even so Rubinstein gives us polish rather than poetry, and his playing fails to probe right into the heart of this great composition. Beecham is not always the Beethoven conductor par excellence, but he is here at his best and subtlest and he must be credited with the loveliest moments (such as the end of the slow movement and the little viola passage in the middle of the Rondo) in a fine if not truly great performance. . . . Readers may be interested in another forthcoming concerto recording which also enlists the services of Sir Thomas. This is the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, with Jascha Heifetz the soloist.

I have often said hard things about Furtwängler's eccentric readings and it is therefore a pleasure to be able to bestow unstinted praise on one of his recordings. The "Dawn and Rhine Journey" from Wagner's "Die Götterdämmerung" has been Toscanini's property, gramophonically speaking, for a long time. Now Furtwängler's marvelous performance with the Vienna Philharmonic seriously challenges the Maestro's supremacy. The Vienna strings have never sounded more glowing than in the Dawn music and their brass shines brilliantly in the "Rhine Journey."

Victoria de Los Angeles is one of those rare singers who lend an especial distinction to any music which they may sing. Her performances of the "Ballad of the King of Thule" and of the "Jewel Song" from "Faust" are outstanding in any way, and I cannot recall any record of the latter excerpt as good as this one. The vocal discovery of 1949 in Europe would appear to be Boris Christoff, a basso in the great Russian tradition who made a remarkable impression at the Salzburg and Lucerne Festivals this summer. He makes his HMV debut singing, not very appropriately, Boris's "Farewell" from Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov," using the Rimsky-Korsakov version. Not since Chaliapin has such mezza voce been heard.

To end this month's survey there is another disc by the late Maria Cebotari, who sings, with the Vienna Philharmonic in attendance, "Mistress Ford's Scena" from Act I of Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor." This is not as good a record as the "Ariadne" and those who are fortunate enough to possess Lotte Lehmann's old Parlophone disc will scarcely be tempted by it, but Cebotari shows a lively sense of fun and the music is quite charming. —THOMAS HEINITZ.

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Some Highs and Lows

THE UNCOMPLIANT NEEDLE

"IT TAKES a worried man to sing a worried song," goes a famous Southern blues ballad. No worry is so heart-breaking as that which gets nowhere. The continuing three-speed confusion (this department can't possibly avoid it) has all of us casting misplaced blame right and left for innumerable troubles, petty and portentous. One of the nastiest and most baffling of late—and it is one of those few where engineers and amateurs are equally at sea—is a kind of buzzy, blasting distortion that shows up, particularly in the inner grooves, during the loudest parts of LP-type records. (Breaking up, crumbling, fuzziness, are other descriptive terms.) Shall we blame the record? Can we even evaluate this kind of trouble—for the rub is that no two people seem to agree as to which are the guilty discs or even to what extent; some listeners hear perfect reproduction from a record that in someone else's copy is hopelessly fuzzy at every climax. Worn points? Faulty arms? Amplifier and speaker trouble? All these can be systematically eliminated and still the trouble persists. And so do the contradictions.

For example, how explain this? We now recognize the magnetic type of pickup as the best and most faithful for high-quality reproduction. Yet there are numerous long playing discs which produce varying degrees of wholly unpleasant blasting as played on several of the topmost brands of magnetic pickup. Naturally blame is cast recordwards. But it happens that these same records when played on certain of the (supposedly inferior) crystal pickups designed for LP records, come through with scarcely a trace of blast or buzz. I have made direct tests end on end and there is no question about this. The quick conclusion that the crystal just doesn't reproduce the high-frequency distortion is no explanation at all, for the best of the new crystals give excellent response to 10,000 cycles and more and can be equalized to give the same tonal balance as the magnetics. Where, then, is the distortion to be found? Clearly it's not in the magnetic pick-up's electrical response: then it must be in the record. Or so many a disillusioned soul has concluded.

In a genuinely exciting two or three weeks the main answers to these questionings have suddenly appeared in concrete form to this writer and the news is good. It looks as though maybe we will be able to live with small-groove, after all.

The difficulties, it seems, are not, as most of us might assume, electrical ones. Instead, they fall into the mechanical category, in that last tiny mechanical link in the long electrical chain, where a micro-stylus traces in actual motion the twistings of a tiny groove, pressed into record material. We all remember the old-time steel needle and the horrid blastings of the inner grooves it made when the worn-down point could no longer trace the tortured grooves; there was a prime example of mechanical distortion. The present troubles with small-groove, slow-speed reproduction are similar but a lot more baffling in the solution. We record sound waves today that wiggle as fast as 10,000 times a second. An LP record revolves once in roughly two seconds. Imagine, then, a sound wave of this high frequency traced on the inner groove of an LP record: in the stretch of some nine inches there must be 10,000 separate wiggles, each one on the order of a thousandth of an inch long!

Lightness, small size—these are already standardized needle factors and the trouble is not in the weight or in the point itself. The major problem, overlooked by most of us, is a matter of needle *stiffness*—the ability of the whole assembly to bend to the groove's will at the unheard of speed of 10,000 reverse curves per inch. "Compliance" is the technical word and the meaning is clear enough. The more compliant a needle is, the more easily it wraps against those flying S-curves.

Then why not go in for a maximum in compliance—let 'er rip? Because another factor is just as important, technically called "damping." You can see what's involved if you think of the normal tendency of any vibrating body to keep on doing what it already is doing. If we are to get an accurate reproduction of groove curves, our styli must be able to stop instantly, to change speed, to jump from soft to loud. The only way to accomplish this is to make it "uncompliant," to put in brakes that will instantly damp out any leftover vibrations. A stiff arm, plus some squashy material, often rubber-like, like hard rubber, will do this nicely. And so the parodox—we must have a needle with a maximum of two opposite qualities. The search for this particular ingenious compromise has been a major engineering problem.

Now we can sum up quickly. Those LP player cartridges which produce considerable buzzing and blasting of loud passages (other things aside) are those in which the needle is too stiff, lacking compliance to follow the sharper and more violent convolutions of the recorded groove. In such cases, alas, the point merely plows its own devastating course, like an auto out of control, smashing down whatever may be in the way. Some of the finest pick-ups electrically speaking are guilty of this kind of mechanical activity. Other LP players, even some with quite pedestrian electrical characteristics, having more compliant needle systems, will trace the same twisting grooves with almost perfect mechanical accuracy.

Practical considerations? Enormous. The crystal cartridges designed for the small-groove records by CBS technicians give excellent mechanical response, most of them definitely better than the fanciest magnetics—hard as it is to have to say it. Some other crystals give much inferior electrical response but excellent mechanical tracking—hence they too will be free of buzzy sounds.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery this column has made concerns the familiar GE reluctance magnetic cartridge in its long playing version. GE, it seems, has issued as many as three types of styli already in its continuing efforts to meet the vital tracking problems. The lastest type, just now reaching stores, is astonishingly better than its precursors—yet few people would ever notice the slight change in shape, nor is there any indication on the box. The new needle, by direct test, removes most of the blasting that the (still sold) older type produces, on the same record with all other conditions identical. How to tell them apart? The newest GE LP-type needle (with red dot) carries the vertical part of the tiny metal ribbon *all the way across* to just behind the sapphire tip itself; in the older and much less satisfactory type the twist from vertical to horizontal comes *halfway* across. (An earlier type with small square of clear plastic damping under the ribbon is inferior to both.)

If you have the earlier type of GE needle in your cartridge by all means acquire the newest one—and listen to the blasting disappear. Congratulations to GE for progress in a difficult area. —EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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JOHN McCORMACK

(*Continued from page 51*)

best seats in the parquet. It did not, I hasten to say, sound better from a distance. The word "flexible" has come to mean agile, or I would characterize it as a flexible voice. Perhaps "pliable" would be better to suggest the capacity for dynamic inflection.

The album of repressings, which has been reviewed in these columns [RECORDINGS, August 1948], is valuable for Handel's "Ridente la calma" and "Care selve," the air "Dai campi, dai prati" from Boito's "Mefistofele," a "Lakmé" excerpt, Brahms's "Feldeinsamkeit." The Handel and Boito particularly reveal the excellencies of the tenor's voice and style. The Brahms song, which the IRCC firm coupled with "Komm' bald," is perhaps only so-so by McCormack standards, although impeccably executed, but illustrates the singer's range of style.

For the collector who excludes mediocre and worse musical values, the current catalogue offers little. McCormack at his exquisite best is revealed by the two Foster songs, "I Dream of Jeanie" and "Sweetly She Sleeps, My Alice Fair." It is instructive to compare the account of Franck's "Panis Angelicus" with Gigli's recording; there is an excellent performance of Schubert's "Der Leiermann," in English, sandwiched between parts of a tasteless miscellany called "An Hour with Schubert." As for the truly Irish songs, McCormack's singing of them was always authoritative and delightful, and it must be emphasized that there are gems of singing, even among the most "popular" items.

The tendency to regard electrical records as the be-all and end-all of reproduction has undoubtedly influenced the withdrawal of many McCormack discs. But there seems to be no legitimate reason for omitting such superb electrical recordings as Wolf's "Auch kleine Dinge" or "Herr, was trägt der Boden hier?" or "Anakreons Grab." McCormack was a specialist in the songs of Hugo Wolf, and this was grudgingly recognized by the inclusion, in one of the Wolf Society albums, of a single disc which included the Irishman's subtle interpretation of "Ganymed" and the tremendous "Beherzigung." Couldn't these be made available to the general public? And what of Handel's "Caro Amore" and "Where'er you walk," vocally somewhat dry but masterpieces of style? (Last listed as RCA Victor 14305.)

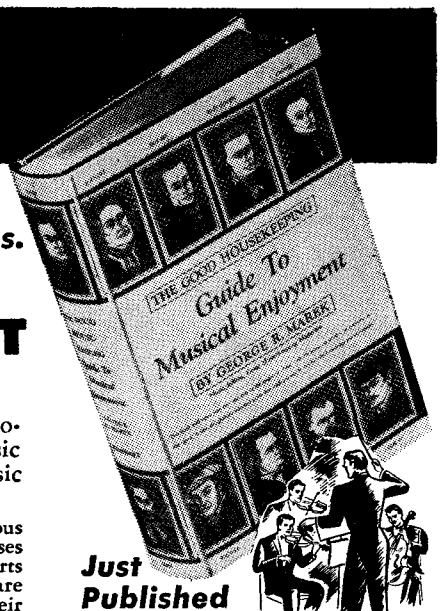
Failing another album of restorations, the collector will have to fall back on the chance acquirement of such old recordings as he can find. Most notable, despite the tootling accompaniment, is "Il mio tesoro" from "Don Giovanni," which won the enthusiastic praise of that redoubtable critic G. Bernard Shaw, and which remains for many of us the definitive performance of the Mozart aria. If the threatened expunction of the Heritage Series (in which it is listed as RCA Victor 15-1015) becomes a reality, you may be able to get it under the HMV label, coupled with "Una furtiva lagrima."

This is strictly outside the province of these articles, but I'd like to express regret for certain things McCormack did not record: Martini's "Plaisir d'amour," Mozart's "An Chloe," and Schubert's "Der Jüngling an der Quelle."

But that is as fantastic as wishing that the tenor's stage presence could be handed down to posterity. Certainly all of John McCormack has not been preserved for the phonophile, but we can at least be grateful that some aspects remain to us of a really distinguished art . . . and that more could be done, God, and RCA, willing.

Besides being a John McCormack enthusiast, Robert Molloy is a successful novelist. His latest is "The Best of Intentions."

Do you suffer from a musical "inferiority complex"?



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RICHARD STRAUSS AS I KNEW HIM

(*Continued from page 48*)

and as my future representative he must know all about my works."

At the end of a three-day whirl the bellicose Bubi had become a Francophile—especially with regard to the Parisiennes. As for his father, he had been dined and wined by old French cronies—a bare two years after Versailles—and invited to conduct at the Paris Opéra.

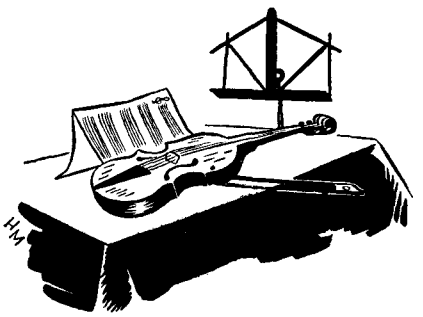
ONE thing that struck me during this Paris episode is how little Strauss knew—or cared—about his contemporaries. In this he was by no means unique among creative artists, and I was reminded of Brahms, who deliberately shut himself off from hearing too much Wagner, for fear that he would "begin to like the stuff."

Although nominally director of the Vienna Opera, where Puccini was performed almost *ad nauseam*, I was assured by an associate that Strauss never listened to it, and didn't know "Madam Butterfly" from "Bohème." One evening, when we were dining in a Paris restaurant, the little orchestra played Sibelius's "Valse Triste." Strauss leaned over to me and asked what it was. When I told him, he said: "Oh? I didn't know he could write such a good tune."

However, he professed a good deal of admiration for Debussy—as indeed for many things French. "Debussy," he once told me, "was a remarkable and altogether unique genius within his own limited domain. In externals he is exceedingly easy to imitate and the temptation is therefore great. But his delicate fancy and his finesse are inimitable, and that is why his imitators fail."

Despite his bantering remark about English music, Strauss was known to have great respect for Elgar. I doubt if he knew any English music more recent than that. With the exception of Gustav Mahler, who enjoyed a growing vogue in Vienna, he virtually ignored his German and Austrian contemporaries. For Schönberg and the atonalists he had no use at all, and he regarded the new idiom as an affectation, a device for seeming original. "Real genius," he said, "never takes originality as its goal." Once, at the Donaueschingen Festival, where he had to listen to a number of "ultra-moderns," he singled out Paul Hindemith. "Hindemith," he said, "*you* don't have to write like that—you have talent!" But when, after listening to a Konzertstück by Hindemith, he was told that the young composer wrote it in only four days, his comment was: "That's exactly what I thought."

As for himself, Strauss was never in doubt that his was an authentic voice. He accepted the homage and adulation he received as a matter of course, with his familiar air of being gently bored. Once, after a Berlin première, when a famous hostess asked him to dinner and fatuously assured him she would make no special fuss, he accepted, saying: "But see that you do make a fuss when Strauss comes to you." His attitude to his own works was that of a competent craftsman. At the dress rehearsal of "The Woman Without a Shadow" he said, almost apologetically: "You know it's quite a job to put a thing like that together." After conducting a really marvelous performance of "Ein Heldenleben" twenty-two



years after it was written, he listened to the thunderous applause with an air of mild surprise. "You know," he turned to me, "that piece is just beginning to be 'modern.'" At the same concert the pianist Elly Ney played the solo part of his "Burleske" for piano and orchestra. When the applause had gone on for two or three minutes Strauss, looking utterly bored, pulled out his watch ostentatiously and rapped for silence, as much as to say: "That's all it deserves."

Strauss's reverence for the great masters of the past was deep, but discriminating. He rarely if ever conducted any but the "great" works—great according to his own personal judgment. Mozart was his favorite composer and his great model. He also acknowledged the direct influence of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, all of them pioneers in the development of the orchestra. He made no secret of his veneration for Richard Wagner, undisturbed by the modern esthetes who looked down on Wagner's pretentious rhetoric and his obese orchestration. Once—quite out of the blue—he began to play me a long passage from "Rheingold," up to the point where a single note of the triangle indicates the glitter of the magic gold. That, he said, was true mastery and the supreme economy of means. Nor did Strauss share Hans von Bülow's opinion of Verdi as the "hurdy-gurdy man." He called "Falstaff" one of the greatest masterpieces of all time.

On one of the last times I talked with Strauss he was concerned with a forthcoming production of "Rosenkavalier" in Chicago. It was in Venice, where I found him sitting at a sidewalk café on the Piazzo San Marco with the ever-present Pauline. He beckoned me to a seat and asked: "What do you think of the baritone who is to sing Ochs?" I could vouch for the beauty of his singing, but knew nothing about his sense of humor. "Ach," exclaimed Strauss, "what do they want with humor in Chicago!"

THE last I heard of Strauss was from mutual friends who saw him in Switzerland after the Second World War. He had lost his fortune through the Nazi inflation and the vicissitudes of war, and he was accepting the hospitality of an old friend, the proprietor of the hotel. But he was in excellent humor, despite his much reduced circumstances and failing health. At eighty-four he had visited both Paris and London, conducting his own works and receiving ovations, his popularity undimmed by the war and his reputed collaboration with the Nazis.

As late as 1943 Strauss had written a Concerto for Horn, the instrument on which his father earned the fame of a virtuoso when Richard was a child. It was played in New York last year. But when a New York bassoon player, an old friend of Strauss, wrote to him asking that he write a concerto for the bassoon he received a characteristic refusal saying: "I am an old man and nothing comes into my head."

As recently as last summer he was enjoying the limpid air of Pontresina, high up in the Engadine Alps, and spending his evenings, as usual, playing Skat. Frau Pauline, dictatorial guardian of his energies, invariably sounded the curfew—to the dismay of all concerned — in the middle of a game. And as usual the great man obeyed. Thanks to her, Strauss reached his beloved Garmisch some weeks before his death. He died as he had lived, in the comfort of his home, overlooking the snowy heights of the Bavarian Alps. Strauss once called his opera "Salome" a scherzo with a fatal ending. With due apologies, that description might well be applied to his life.

It is as a radio reporter that Cesar Saerchinger is best known. In the Thirties he directed European activities for CBS, and since then has been a news commentator in this country. Mr. Saerchinger's interest in music dates back to the years before World War I when he edited a fourteen-volume work called "The Art of Music."

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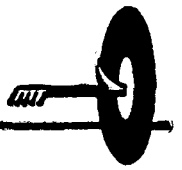
HITS AND MISSES



HILLBILLY songs we have always with us—like cowboy efforts and the blues. Most of them are formulistic and bad. But now and then, in any of the categories, there may be heard echoes of gifted folk musicians, and these men, as everyone knows, can cast spells. This month it happens in the hillbilly department. In the midst of a large amount of banal mountain caterwauling comes a presumably traditional number (no composer's name is given) called "Bonaparte's Retreat," rendered in fine style by Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys (RCA-Victor 21-0111, 75¢). We hasten to emphasize that this is no musical Matterhorn; it is simply a memorable little song about a Dixie dancing party. It is plaintively harmonized and set to a throbbing rhythm. We think it has the power to haunt. And while in deep Southern territory it may be added that Circle Records have produced another album of ripe New Orleans jazz, this time by the "Eclipse Alley Five" (Circle S-26, $2.88). This is very much music for the New Orleans initiate, and likely to drive the musical outlander wild. In the first place, the idiom is deeply Louisianian, and pronounced by local masters who have seldom if ever tried to speak any other: George Lewis, clarinet; Jim Robinson, trombone; Laurence Marrero, banjo; Alcide Pavageau, bass, and Baby Dodds, drums. In the second place, the combination is curious—note the absence of the trumpet or cornet, which is usually pivotal in the small New Orleans band. But with these warnings delivered, we feel safe in saying that these highly relaxed numbers, rehearsed in a backyard of the Vieux Carré and sounding quite as though they were recorded there on a warm, beery evening, will appeal mightily to followers of the old-time syncopated religion.

One of the pleasures of the month has been the discovery that in an album called "Music from 'Jolson Sings Again'" (RCA Victor P254, $3.25) there is absolutely no singing by the eminent cantor himself. Jolson, to our mind, has always brought a klaxon insensibility to the musical art, and, so far as we are concerned, he must depart whether Jimmy Durante ever puts in that other knee or not (old Durante joke reprinted on request). In the album under consideration we were relatively delighted to find Vaughn Monroe, rather than the master, doing the awful "Sonny Boy." But there were also unalloyed disappointments: Tommy Dorsey suddenly broke up a promising beguine version of "I Only Have Eyes for You" with jarring fox-trot rhythms, and Count Basie also destroyed a mood by accelerating the fundamental beat of his "After You've Gone."

Dinah Shore is a pleasing singer in her delicate way, and when she gets hold of superior songs, durable things are apt to happen. In her new album, "Reminiscing with Dinah Shore" (Columbia C192, $3.15), there are no less than five first-rate tunes—"I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plans," "Ma Curly Headed Babby," "Little White Lies," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," and "I May Be Wrong, But I Think You're Wonderful." Miss Shore's musical style stands the passing of time a great deal better than that of the late and famous Glenn Miller. That gentlemanly bandmaster has been memorialized by several albums of the music with which he charmed pre-Pearl Harbor youth. The latest is "Starlight Serenades" (RCA Victor P255, $3.25), a collection of his numbers with stellar titles—such as "The Story of a Starry Night" and "Stairway to the Stars." Needless to say, the Miller band was beautifully schooled. But in its sentimental vein, as here, we find everything a little too bland for pleasure. The celebrated saxophone section and Ray Eberle's voice both strike us as a little oily, a trifle epicene. It is a possibly significant fact that over the past few decades there has been a marked change in the character of the nation's "sweet" dance music. In the heyday of the Twenties—under such leaders as Art Hickman, Paul Whiteman, Leo Reisman, and Abe Lyman—the popular thing was a sweeping melody played over a firmly pulsing rhythm, at a moderate, danceable tempo. The mood might be said to have been romantic and *allegro*. In the Thirties, with such bands as the Casa Loma and Glenn Miller's, "sweet" music started to slow down, until the tempo reached that of ooze and the mood had shifted to a concupiscent *adagio*. It still is. Comments are welcome, and we are readying a few ourselves.

Lucky Roberts is a Harlem pianist of years and talent and a great reputation among the older uptown generations. He plays a number of his piano compositions in "Lucky Roberts: Ragtime King" (Circle album S-12, $3.93). They are classics of their raggy kind. —WILDER HOBSON.

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Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

More "Carnaval"

SIR: Thank you for your excellent campaign to get Rachmaninoff's recording of Schumann's "Carnaval" reinstated in the RCA Victor catalogue. And put me down for a copy in manual sequence, please. It's time that RCA Victor . . . reinstated many recordings, some of which may have been surpassed technically . . . but which will never be surpassed artistically, if equaled. . . . And why was the recording of Beethoven's string quartet Opus 18, No. 3 withdrawn? A copy sold at auction in Oakland, recently, for $30.

FRANK STORER.

Los Angeles, Calif.

SIR: Put me down for a copy of Rachmaninoff's recording of "Carnaval." Either on plastic or shellac.

J. H. STRUBLE.

Charlottesville, Va.

SIR: You can add my name to the list of those who would like a reissue of Rachmaninoff's recording of "Carnaval."

GEORGE H. DEUBLE, JR.

Canton, O.

SIR: There are a number of Rachmaninoff sets I would like to see reissued, but "Carnaval" would be a welcome compromise if that is the only one that can be agreed upon.

L. M. DORSET.

Toronto, Can.

SIR: I applaud your Rachmaninoff "Carnaval" campaign, but why not a new issue also by Solomon? His recent performance in New York (Carnegie Hall) was as masterful as any I have ever heard, and that includes Rachmaninoff, Gabrilowitsch, Hess, and Novaes, beautiful Schumann players all.

HELEN OSBORNE.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Reader Osborne has a valid point, as those who heard the Solomon recital to which she refers will attest. However, the problem of selecting an artist to make a new version of "Carnaval" is not our headache: we will settle for the aspirin contained in discontinued RCA Victor album 70, the Rachmaninoff version.*

Obscure LP's?

SIR: Can you tell me if any of the French producers of records have investigated the possibilities of LP, à la English Decca, or HMV and English Columbia, as mentioned by Thomas Heinitz in a recent issue. I am considering the purchase of some items from this source, and would value the information.

R. L. GORDON.

Minneapolis, Minn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The one company about which we have definite information is L'Oiseau Lyre, which has completed arrangements to process a number of its sizable collections on LP. Among these are Isabelle Nef's "Well-Tempered Clavier," the Purcell violin sonatas, etc. They should be available for comment in our next issue.*

Schumann Singing Schubert

SIR: Since neither Franz Schubert nor Elisabeth Schumann has been accused of war crimes or collaboration, why can we no longer obtain records of Schumann singing songs of Schubert? "Der Hirt aus dem Felsen" (RCA Victor 14185, cut-out) would be a good choice with which to start off some much needed reissues.

JOHN H. CONE.

Los Angeles, Calif.

Memoriam to Strauss

SIR: Richard Strauss's death on September 8 was not mentioned with one syllable in the pages of RECORDINGS for October. . . . Stale news? Inexcusable oversight? Not worth mentioning? Nothing of all that! Simply, lack of respect on the part of RECORDINGS, for which one should feel ashamed and deeply shocked.

ROBERT BREUER.

Elmhurst, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Richard Strauss has been for so long a figure of history that his temporal life was more a phenomenon than a fact. Our feeling for Strauss may be noted in Cesar Saerchinger's article on page 47.*

Why for BIEM?

SIR: I have been curious for a long time about many label markings found on recordings of domestic and foreign origin. A particular one excites my interest. What does BIEM signify? It is found on most of my HMV's, French HMV's, foreign Columbias, Parlophones, and others. Can you explain?

PHILIP E. SCHWEIGER, JR.

Baton Rouge, La.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Our best information is that it signifies the manufacturer's adherence to an international royalty agreement . . . something akin to our ASCAP though not identical.*

RECORD MART

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Recordings Reports on Current Pop Releases

PERFORMER, SONG, DATA	REPORT
Calloway, Cab: "Ol' Joe Louis." RCA Victor 30-004, 65¢.	One more in a recent outburst to current sports heroes, of which most have the esthetic virtue of the "General Douglas MacArthur Parade March." A traditional rhythm tribute to the Bomber, of which the amazing factor is the way in which Calloway suggests, after all these years, that he is having one wonderful time. Maybe he is at that.
Coates, Eric: "Three Bears," etc. London LPS 27, $4.95.	Whether Coates would be flattered or flabbergasted to find himself between Calloway and Nat Cole, I hesitate to guess: but this is as good a place as any to direct attention to the bright tunes, lively orchestration, and zestful playing of the "Bears" suite, the "Three Men" suite, and the "Dance of the Orange Blossoms." At that, Coates's "Sleepy Lagoon" was a Hit-Parade sensation of sorts, and any of these might be metamorphosed similarly. Coates conducts the New Symphony Orchestra with a zealot's pride, and the recording is excellent, if a little burdened by background noise.
Cole, Nat: "You Can't Lose a Broken Heart." Capitol 57-749, 65¢.	Intimate cooing by the King of an attractive tune by that fine ragtime pianist James P. Johnson. This, however, is strictly "torch," and very acetylene at that. Overside, Cole includes the Polynesian in "Nalani," not quite so sweet as her tune-sister Leilani.
Cugat, Xavier: "Nocturnal Chaperon." Columbia 38558, 60¢.	A distinctive rumba by Bornier and Marroquin, previously circulated in its authentic Spanish form as "Nocturnal." The English lyrics slide by innocuously in the skilful handling by the late Buddy Clark, a notably resourceful fellow in matters of this sort.
Drake, Alfred, etc.: "Roberta." Decca LP 8007, $4.85.	A highly successful transfer to LP of the Decca treatment of this score, in which Kitty Carlisle, Paula Laurence, and Kathryn Meisle give fine service to all its fine Kern tunes: "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "The Touch of Your Hand," "You're Devastating," "I'll Be Hard to Handle," "Yesterdays," and half a dozen others. The treatment is "original cast," though these performers, of course, are not in any sense. Drake is in particularly appealing voice here and the reproduction is first class in resonance and clarity.
Haymes, Dick: "Say It Isn't So," etc. Decca LP 5023, $2.85.	A notable collection of Irving Berlin tunes, embellished not only by the Haymes voice, but by the piano backgrounds of Carmen Cavallaro. "Say It Isn't So," sung with perfect style by Haymes, is the best of the eight, "Cheek to Cheek" in an inappropriate up-tempo the least appealing. But all the others—"Say It with Music," "The Song Is Ended," "Soft Lights and Sweet Music," "The Girl on the Magazine Cover," "All Alone," and "Lady of the Evening"—are expertly sung, in the easy, unaffected manner of Haymes at his best. Cavallaro's piano is almost too well reproduced—it sounds like something in a publisher's back room—but Haymes's voice sounds especially well on this Long Playing disc.
Herman, Woody: "The Crickets." Capitol 57-682, 65¢.	Herman gets A for enterprise in adapting this Josef Marais song for band purposes, but its monotony—even if calculated—becomes a bit excessive. Mary Ann McCall is the vocalist. Overside Herman pounds through "More Moon" (a Shorty Rogers creation) with more huff than puff. Bill Harris, on trombone, Shelley Manno, drums, and Terry Gibbs, vibraphones, are Herman's most useful co-workers.
Vaughan, Sarah: "Once in a While." M-G-M 10549, 60¢.	A super-special sybilization of the oft-admired Tommy Dorsey theme, performed in a sleepy, drag tempo. It is all pretty insinuating until, on the last chorus, Miss Vaughan slides off into a fractious counter-melody that makes no lyric sense to me. The treatment is even more depressing on the overside, "The Man I Love," because it moves faster, in a kind of slide-whistle effect. The "non-breakable" (under ordinary use) Metrolite will snap when flexed between the hands. I know: I tried.
Ventura, Charlie: "Yankee Clipper." RCA Victor 20-3552, 75¢.	This, presumably, is RCA and Ventura's answer to Columbia and Les Brown's "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio," for, as anyone who has ever listened to the radio knows, the "Yankee Clipper" is J. P. DiMaggio. It is also a bop-style tribute, which rather limits its appeal to that vanishing specie.

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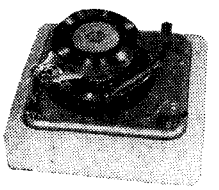

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Records Over the Nation

A Dealer Survey of Top Record Sellers

City and Store	*Popular Singles*	*Popular Albums*	*Classical Singles*	*Classical Albums*
BERKELEY, CALIF. (*Berkeley Music House*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Scarlatti Concerto Grosso (CT)	Beethoven Eroica (CT-LP)
BIRMINGHAM (*Stairway to Music*)	You're Breaking My Heart (D)	South Pacific (C)	Frühlingsstimmen (CT)	Beethoven Triple Concerto (C-LP)
BOSTON (*Mosher Music Co.*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Student Prince—Peerce (RCA)	That Midnight Kiss (RCA)
CINCINNATI (*Steinberg's, Inc.*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Bohème—Conley (L)	Reger Serenade (CT)
DALLAS (*The Record Shop*)	You're Breaking My Heart (M)	Doris Day (C)	Mattinata (RCA)	La Traviata (C-LP)
(*Whittle Music Co.*)	You're Breaking My Heart (M)	South Pacific (C)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Bach Program (C-LP)
DENVER (*Knight Campbell*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Jalousie (RCA)	Beethoven Ninth (C)
DETROIT (*Campus Record Shop*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	Doris Day (C)	Danse Macabre (L)	Der Freischütz (DG)
(*Doubleday Book Shops*)	Bolero (M)	South Pacific (C)	Jalousie (RCA)	Lucia (Cet-LP)
(*Grinnell Bros.*)	Saturday Night Fish Fry (D)	South Pacific (C)	Jalousie (RCA)	Kostelanetz Favorites (C)
KANSAS CITY (*Jenkins Music Co.*)	You're Breaking My Heart (M)	South Pacific (Cap)	Magic Fire (RCA)	South Pacific (C)
LOS ANGELES (*Birkel-Richardson Co.*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	Wayfaring Stranger (C)	Scarlatti—Landowska (RCA)	Strauss Operettas (CT)
MEMPHIS (*Words and Music*)	You're Breaking My Heart (M)	Dancing in the Dark (D-LP)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	L'Amico Fritz (Cet-LP)
MIAMI (*Associated Stores*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	Carle Comes Calling (C)	Clair de Lune (C)	Scheherazade (RCA)
MINNEAPOLIS (*Don Leary's Inc.*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	Jolson Sings Again (D)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	South Pacific (C)
NEW ORLEANS (*Doubleday Book Shops*)	You're Breaking My Heart (M)	South Pacific (C)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Pirates of Penzance (L-LP)
NEW YORK (*Doubleday Book Shops*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Bachianas (C)	Trial by Jury (L-LP)
(*Dynamic Electronics*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Aida—Lanza (RCA)	La Traviata (C-LP)
(*Heins & Bolet*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Some Enchanted Evening (C)	Beethoven Triple Concerto (C-LP)
(*Liberty Music Shop*)	Jealous Heart (L)	South Pacific (C)	Bachianas (C)	Pinafore (L-LP)
(*Rabson's*)	Riders in the Sky (RCA)	South Pacific (C)	Jalousie (RCA)	Jeux (RCA)
OMAHA (*Lyon & Healy, Inc.*)	Someday (D)	South Pacific (C)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Carmen Excerpts (C-LP)
PHILADELPHIA (*Jacobs Bros.*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Billy the Kid (C)	Vaughan Williams Sixth (C)
(*The Record Shop*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Aida—Lanza (RCA)	Bruch Concerto (C)
PORTLAND, ORE. (*Sherman, Clay & Co.*)	Shipping Around (Cap)	South Pacific (C)	Clair de Lune (RCA)	Erna Sack (CT)
ST. LOUIS (*Doubleday Book Shops*)	Lucky Old Sun (M)	South Pacific (C)	Rachmaninoff Prelude	Nobilissima Visione (C-LP)

Compiled as of October 14, 1949.

Key: C—Columbia Cap—Capitol Cet—Cetra CT—Capitol-Telefunken D—Decca L—London
M—Mercury RCA—RCA Victor

Leaders: It's a Mercury month in the popular single category with Frankie Lane's "Lucky Old Sun," the favorite of fourteen stores, having as its closest competitor Vic Damone's "You're Breaking My Heart." "South Pacific" still holds sway among popular albums for the fifth consecutive month. No strong trends are observable in the classical columns except for such old timers as "Clair de Lune" and "Jalousie."

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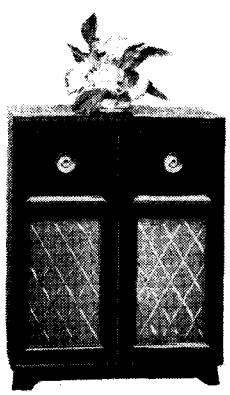

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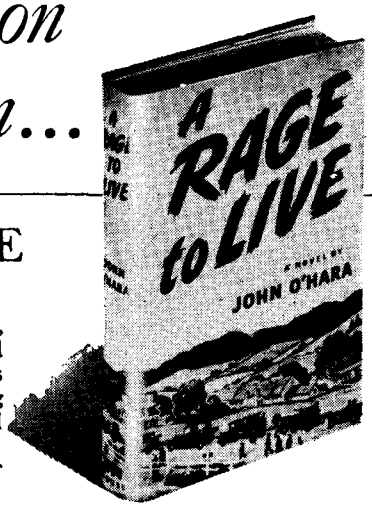

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